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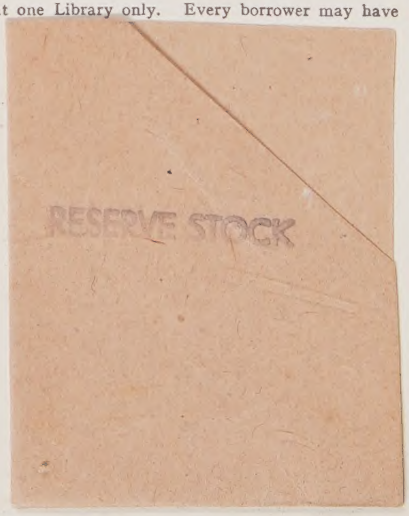

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Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz
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LIVES OF THE HANOVERIAN QUEENS OF ENGLAND

BY

ALICE DRAYTON GREENWOOD

VOL. II

CHARLOTTE SOPHIA OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ
QUEEN OF GEORGE III

AMELIA ELIZABETH CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK
QUEEN OF GEORGE IV

ADELAIDE OF SAXE-MEININGEN
QUEEN OF WILLIAM IV

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PREFACE

THE political and social records of the age of George III and George IV are overwhelming in quantity, and reflect the most various views and principles. I cannot claim more than to have attempted a comparison of evidence and opinions upon the careers of the three Queens whose biographies are sketched in this volume. The seventy-seven years covered by the reigns of George III and his two sons were remarkable for the greatly increased publicity of life, and too often for a shamelessness of conduct only matched by the brazen candour of the newspapers, satires, etc., which ministered to curiosity or party passion. It was a time of much letter and diary writing: people were conscious that history was being made, and anxious to record their part in it.

The best sources for the social history of the Court have long been accessible in print. First come the works of Horace Walpole, especially his "Letters," referred to in the following pages by the numbers assigned to them in the edition of the late Mrs. Paget Toynbee, an edition for which all lovers of Walpole must ever feel gratitude. The

"Memoirs of Mrs. Delany" and the "Diary of Madame d'Arblay" (here cited from the edition of Mr. Edmund Gosse) paint the most pleasant aspects of the Royal circle. Fanny Burney's exact standing in Queen Charlotte's "family" has been settled by Mrs. A. R. Ellis ("Early Diary by Fanny Burney," vol. ii, Appendix). She was Second Keeper of the Robes. Mrs. Ellis also (*ibid.* App. 4) appraises justly the "general inexactitude" of Mrs. Papendiek's more domestic "Reminiscences." But the latter, untrustworthy indeed as to facts and dates, doubtless represents truthfully the impressions of a certain section of Queen Charlotte's immediate servants. More remarkable are "The Harcourt Papers" (privately printed 1876-1891 and 1905), which contain many intimate letters from the royal family and Lady Harcourt's Diary of the illness of George III in 1788-9. This is quite distinct from "Mrs. Harcourt's Diary of the Court of George III," printed in vol. xiii of the Philobiblon Society's "Miscellanies" (1871-2). Unfortunately the communicator of this interesting excerpt did not see fit to give any hint of its *provenance*, or the extent of the whole, and the "Harcourt Papers" contain, we are told, no trace of this "so-called Diary of Mrs. Harcourt." But I do not think its genuineness need be doubted. The second Earl Harcourt and his wife Elizabeth (Vernon) were personal

friends of Queen Charlotte, and Lady Harcourt's "Diary" is most judiciously worded. The Earl's brother William, Miss Burney's Colonel (later General) Harcourt, was a confidential attendant on George III. His clever wife, Mary Lockhart (born Danby), is the Mrs. Harcourt of Malmesbury's and Miss Burney's diaries. The undated portion of her "Diary," printed by the Philobiblon Society, agrees in its curt style with her unquestioned letters in the "Harcourt Papers." Queen Charlotte remarked on her "odd way" of saying things; the Editor of the "Harcourt Papers" says she was considered "very eccentric"; she was certainly original. A careful scrutiny of the allusions in the fragmentary Diary would probably determine its date. It is badly printed; probably the MS. was hard to read, for odd mistakes occur, notably a general "Hanaut" (cited on p. 51) *read* Harcourt, the writer's husband. Such errors go far to prove the genuineness of the original. The Duke of Gloucester's very candid communications to Mrs. Harcourt tally with his confidences to Horace Walpole and Lady Susan O'Brien.

Information upon the Court where the political situation was concerned must be gleaned from the Lives, Correspondence, Journals, etc., of public characters—Eldon, Malmesbury, Auckland, Colchester, Rose, Sir. G. Elliot, Earl Grey, Charles Fox. The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos'

"Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III" seems trustworthy, his later volumes much less so. Vehse, "Geschichte der Höfe des Hauses Braunschweig," gives German anecdote, but he is loose in statement, and his authorities cannot, at all events in England, be checked.

The diarists of fashionable society furnish a mass of information, not always to be trusted: Greville, Croker, Creevey, Wraxall, Jesse, Lady Charlotte Campbell (or Bury, by her second marriage), Miss Knight, Lady Sarah Lennox, Lady Holland, Princess Lieven, the Duchesse de Dino, Albemarle's "Fifty Years of my Life" and the "Jerningham Letters," are obvious sources. The "Secret History of the Court of England," formerly unjustly attributed to Lady Anne Hamilton, is a farrago of fact and rumour, worthless except as showing what could safely be printed and believed. The blameless "Diaries of a Lady of Quality," on the other hand, afford very little. The wealth of newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, satires, and caricatures is inexhaustible. It is by these that the information and opinion of the public must principally be gauged. The old-fashioned biographies, such as the works of Watkins, Huish, Oulton, Cobbin, or Thos. Green, the sources of the best known anecdotes, suffer from the requirements of panegyric, but Clerke's "Life of Queen Caroline," and Lady Rose Weigall's "Life of Princess Charlotte," are

valuable, and the volumes on Caroline, attributed to the historian John Adolphus, comprehensive. Interesting material is to be found in several recent publications, especially in Wilkins' "Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV," and Mr. W. S. Childe-Pemberton's "Romance of the Princess Amelia." A few touches may be supplied from some of the Historical MSS. Commission's publications.

That part of the career of Caroline II which was of political moment may be studied exhaustively in the Debates of Parliament, in "The Book" or "The Genuine Book" (both 1813), and in the Lives, Correspondence, etc., of the principal lawyers and politicians—Eldon, Erskine, Denman, Romilly, Perceval, Castlereagh, Canning, Liverpool, etc. A telling contribution was the anonymous "Journal of an English Traveller," 1814-16, printed at the end of Baron Stendhal's "Rome, Naples, and Florence, etc." (1818). Southey's "Authentic Memoirs of George III," which sometimes appears in lists, seems to be an imaginary reference. No such work is to be traced, unless it be a misnomer for the anonymous "George III, his Court and Family" (2 vols., 1820).

It was impossible to cite the authority for every statement made in the following pages, but no statement or conjecture is here given except with what has appeared to me sufficient contemporary warrant. And if the actions of certain eminent men

recorded in these pages should not seem to tally with the usually accepted lines of their portraiture, it will perhaps be borne in mind that the purely personal nature of these brief biographies exhibits these persons in an unaccustomed light, and out of their professional setting.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add that, whereas while engaged upon Volume I of this work, I found my preconceived and more orthodox opinions considerably altered by a study of the contemporary accounts of George I and George II, I entered upon Volume II with (I believe) a perfectly open mind, and such opinions as I have formed have grown out of the evidence furnished by the materials.

The task of Biography is not exactly that of History proper. The persons of whose lives and characters one endeavours to form a just estimate were obliged to choose their path without the light shed by later research and criticism upon their difficulties and opportunities. One must try to see the circumstances as they probably appeared to the actors themselves.

In conclusion, I beg to express my warm gratitude to the Master of Peterhouse for his great kindness in reading the proof sheets of this volume and according me his much valued advice.

A. D. Greenwood.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE v

CHARLOTTE SOPHIA OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ

QUEEN OF GEORGE III

CHAP. I. EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE . . . 3

II. THE ENGLISH ROYAL FAMILY, 1760-1767 34

III. DOMESTIC LIFE, 1762-88; THE ROYAL HOME BEFORE THE KING'S ILLNESS . 57

IV. DOMESTIC LIFE, 1762-1788 (CONTINUED): EXCURSIONS AND ALARMS . . . 82

V. UNPOPULARITY OF THE KING—MISS BURNEY IN THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD. THE KING'S INSANITY (1788) . . 93

VI. THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE OF WALES, AND THE FIRST REGENCY BILL—THE KING'S RECOVERY AND THE REJOICINGS —WEYMOUTH (1788-1790) . . . 121

VII. CHARLOTTE'S LATER LIFE—MARRIAGES OF HER CHILDREN—INSANITY OF THE KING—POSITION UNDER THE REGENCY —CONDUCT TO PRINCESS OF WALES— LAST DAYS—(1792-1818) . . . 139

VIII. CHARLOTTE AND SOCIETY—FASHIONS— MORALS 172

IX. ECONOMY AND UNPOPULARITY . . 189

PAGE

CHAP. X. CHARLOTTE'S CHARITIES AND KINDNESSES—MRS. DELANY, CHARLOTTE AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS . . 204
XI. CHARLOTTE AND POLITICS. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF HER 222

AMELIA ELIZABETH CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK

QUEEN OF GEORGE IV

CHAP. I. EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE . . . 239
II. THE SEPARATION—MOTHER AND DAUGHTER—(1796-1811) 262
III. "THE DELICATE INVESTIGATION" (1806-7) 281
IV. MIDDLE LIFE 301
V. EXILE—THE QUEEN'S TRIAL—THE END 328

ADELAIDE OF SAXE-MEININGEN

QUEEN OF WILLIAM IV

CHAP. I. MARRIAGE. DUCHESS OF CLARENCE . 357
II. ACCESSION—THE REFORM BILL . . 373
III. DOMESTIC AND COURT LIFE OF THE QUEEN 394

NOTES 421

PEDIGREE . . . . . *face* 426

INDEX 427

PORTRAITS

Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

From a painting by Allan Ramsay in the National Portrait Gallery. *Frontispiece*

Amelia Elizabeth Caroline of Brunswick.

From a painting by Sir T. Lawrence in the National Portrait Gallery . *to face p.* 239

Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen.

From a painting by Sir W. Beechey in the National Portrait Gallery . *to face p.* 357

CHARLOTTE SOPHIA OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ

QUEEN OF GEORGE III

BORN 19TH MAY, 1744; MARRIED 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1761;
DIED 16TH NOVEMBER, 1818

CHARLOTTE SOPHIA

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE

OF the minor states of Germany the twin duchies of Mecklenburg were in the eighteenth century among the less important. They were small and poor, and the population was backward in the extreme. A proud if undistinguished nobility, numerous out of all proportion to the size of the country or to their own resources, clung to every tradition and privilege of the Middle Ages. Scarcely any middle class existed, scarcely any manufactures or commerce, so that nearly the whole of the inhabitants were either nobles or half-free peasants. Even some years later than the battle of Waterloo an enthusiastic geographer may be found lauding to the skies the amazing philanthropy and courageous liberalism of the then Grand Duke (Queen Charlotte's nephew) for permitting the abolition of serfdom. The ideas and manners of the Court and society of Mecklenburg were cast in the most rigid grooves of custom, and the cult of the sanctity of rank in its most extravagant propriety left no loophole for the entrance of modern ideas and sympathies. It was in such an atmosphere that the future Queen of England was trained.

Mecklenburg forms a part of the low-lying, sandy plain of Germany, rich in cattle, horses, and corn, fertile and well watered, counting more lakes than towns, and possessed of one mountain, 300 feet high. Mecklenburg-Strelitz, much the smaller of the two duchies, contained

five small towns, in one of which, Neu-Strelitz, was the ducal residence. The town had been rebuilt and renamed early in the eighteenth century—one of the incidents of the universal German homage to France—and it presented to the eye a modernized and not unhandsome appearance, laid out in the form of an eight-pointed star. It was pleasantly situated between a pair of lakes, and almost enclosed in woods, and the following of the chase therein formed the principal occupation of the dukes. Life here was normally almost as tranquil as the undimmed surface of the lake itself.

The ruler of this tiny State, Duke Adolphus Frederick II, was Charlotte's eldest brother. His family traced their ancestry as far as any ruling family on the Continent, even beyond Charlemagne, to Gaiseric, King of the Vandals, but they could boast neither wealth nor power. The Duke was scarcely more than a nominal sovereign, subsisting on a tiny revenue. Whatever influence little Mecklenburg might be supposed to exert on the politics of the Germanic Empire was wielded by the feudal nobles, and as their sympathies had been clearly displayed, during the Seven Years' War, upon the side of Austria, and against their next neighbour, Prussia, the defenceless duchy, although nominally at peace, was made to endure at the hands of Frederick II all the misery of war. Prussians, Russians, and Swedes quartered themselves upon the luckless country, "the Cornsack," as Frederick called it, and ate it bare, leaving desolation behind them. The Duke and the widowed Dowager-Duchess must have had some difficulty during these hard years in providing for the younger members of the family even the simple nurture which was indispensable.

Charlotte Sophia was the eighth child and the younger surviving daughter of the late Duke, and in the year 1761 was still considered a schoolgirl. She was kept

busy with the studies necessary to a good education in those hard-working days, superintended by an accomplished governess and by a remarkable linguist, Madame Grabow, "the Sappho of Germany," under whom she learned to talk fluently in French, which was still the polite language of Germany. She read history and was fond of botany and of natural history; her performance on the clavichord was more than passable; she could draw a little, and was an expert needlewoman, particularly skilful in tapestry and bead-work, and, above all, she had been excellently trained in Protestant theology. But she had not been introduced into Society—the limited but rigid society of little Strelitz. She never "dressed," in the style necessary for meeting company, except upon Sundays, when she was taken for a formal drive, after the long Lutheran service, in a coach and six with mounted guards in attendance, nor did she ever dine at the high table with the grown-up members of the family.

In fact, her sister, nine years older, was not yet married, although the family had condescended to consider for her the proposal made by the Duke of Roxburghe (of antiquarian fame); and so little likelihood appeared of finding a sufficiently high-born husband for Charlotte, that she had already been provided for otherwise, her name having been enrolled in one of the aristocratic Protestant convents, where the endowments of an ancient age and faith served to maintain a dignified retreat for the superfluous daughters of princes and nobles.

Long afterwards she described them to Fanny Burney. "There is great licence in them," she said (no doubt meaning "liberty"). "They have balls, not at home, but next door, and there is no restriction but to go to prayers at eight, at nine, and at night—that is very little you know—and wear black or white." The dress, very pretty, she considered, with its many hundred

plaits and its threefold cap, was almost all she could in later years recollect of this convent, the cross and badge of which had already been bestowed upon her when her selection as the bride of George III enabled her to transfer her conventual appointment to a friend.

But although still in the schoolroom and destined to a Protestant sisterhood, Charlotte was expected to fulfil her share of the duties prescribed by courtesy or etiquette. In those days of much letter-writing, it was proper to congratulate or to condole with kinsfolk and friends upon every remarkable occurrence, and when, in 1760, Frederick II won the battle of Torgau, the Court of Mecklenburg-Strelitz felt congratulations to be both fitting and politic. The young princess was set to express them—though whether as a real letter or for good practice is not quite certain—and the epistle which she produced was of so remarkable a type as to make quite a little sensation.

May it please Your Majesty, I am at a loss whether I shall congratulate or condole with you on your late victory; since the same success which has covered you with laurels, has overspread the country of Mecklenburg with desolation. I know, Sire, that it seems unbecoming my sex, in this age of vicious refinement, to feel for one's country, to lament the horrors of war, or wish for the return of peace. I know you may think it more properly my province to study the arts of pleasing, or to turn my thoughts to subjects of a more domestic nature: but however unbecoming it may be in me, I cannot resist the desire of interceding for this unhappy people.

It was but a few years ago that this territory wore the most charming appearance. The country was cultivated, the peasant looked cheerful, and the towns abounded with riches and festivity. What an alteration at present from such a charming scene! I am not expert at description, nor can my fancy add any horrors to the picture: but surely even conquerors themselves would weep at the hideous prospect now before

me. The whole country, my dear country, lies one frightful waste, presenting only objects to excite terror, pity, and despair. The business of the husbandman and the shepherd is quite discontinued: the husbandman and the shepherd are become soldiers themselves, and help to ravage the soil they formerly occupied. The towns are inhabited only by old men, women, and children; perhaps here and there a warrior, by wounds or loss of limbs rendered unfit for service, is left at his door; his little children hang round him, ask a history of every wound, and themselves grow soldiers before they find strength for the field. But this were nothing, did we not feel the alternate insolence of either army as it happens to advance or retreat. It is impossible to express the confusion even those who call themselves our friends create. Even those from whom we might expect redress, oppress us with new calamities. From your justice therefore it is that we hope relief; to you even women and children may complain, whose humanity stoops to the meanest petition, and whose power is capable of repressing the greatest injustice.

I am, Sire,

etc.

Whatever this letter may have owed to the suggestions of Charlotte's excellent governess, it really showed, as she herself hints, an unusual courage in one so young and inexperienced to venture upon addressing a famous King in a tone almost verging on expostulation. And it was, perhaps, little less wonderful in a member of the royal caste, so correctly brought up, to betray any personal interest in ruined peasants and ravaged farms. In the volumes of lively correspondence bequeathed to us from that communicative age, it is rare to find so much as a mention of the peasantry, unless, perhaps, as adjuncts of a picturesque prospect.

It is believed that a copy of this remarkable letter was shown to the young King of England, whose astute mother perhaps hoped that this expression of an antipathy to the great war, evidently as strong as was

George's own, would appeal to him more powerfully than any description of beauty, wherein, in truth, Charlotte was sadly lacking.

The dowager Princess of Wales was seeking a wife for her son, who had intimated to Lord Bute[1] his desire to be wedded at once, and she had despatched a Scottish *protégé* of the Earl's, one Colonel Graeme, to investigate the qualifications of the Protestant princesses of Germany. Those of Gotha, Brunswick, Brandenburg-Schwedt, Darmstadt, Anhalt-Bernburg, and Mecklenburg, apparently formed the list of possible brides.[2]

What particular merits the Colonel found in the plain Princess, barely seventeen, whom he met with her mother and sister at the Baths of Pyrmont, may perhaps be guessed. A girl so quietly brought up, so much in awe of her parental elder brother, so completely inured to a domestic and frugal life, and unfitted by her purely schoolroom education and her lack of brilliance to aspire to either personal or political ascendancy, would exactly suit the domineering, unintellectual Princess-mother, whose one dread was the counter-influence which a clever or beautiful wife might acquire over her own hitherto dutiful son. It seemed as if she might suit the young King himself well enough too; he would certainly require a domestic and amenable wife; she was only six years younger than himself—and he was young for his years; moreover she was reported to be musical, though how very far short she fell, in this respect, of George's standard, Graeme was probably not qualified to tell. The only difficulty was her undeniable plainness.

In Charlotte Sophia the English court secured the simplicity and virtue of a good country maiden trained

[1] John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, confidant of the dowager Princess of Wales. His wife was the daughter of the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu.

[2] Lehndorff, "30 Jahre am Hofe Friedrichs d. Grossen."

in a well-regulated schoolroom. Inflexible morals, the morals of a dutiful child sheltered from all temptation, were hers. She had acquired all the proper accomplishments, and from her earliest years had imbibed what probably the Princess Dowager, and certainly Charlotte herself, held to be only second to sound piety, the orthodox German principles of etiquette and the sanctity of rank. She is said to have sometimes, in later years, reminded her more careless husband—"il n'y a pas d'Olbreuse ici,"[1] laying her hand on her heart: a malicious allusion to the parentage of his great-grandmother, Sophia Dorothea.

The German story[2] of how her good fortune arrived is pretty: Charlotte was amusing herself in the palace garden with a young friend, talking of the future, of marriage, and "Who will take a poor little princess like me?" asked she, just as a post-horn was wound at the gate. Ida von Bülow laughingly replied: "There comes the suitor"; it was, indeed, Graeme with the English proposal.

The private proffer of the hand of George III was made at once, and was instantly accepted by Duke Adolphus Frederick. The splendid future so unexpectedly offered to his sister might, and, in fact did, secure also a provision for a younger brother or two. It almost seems as if the acceptance was notified before Charlotte herself was informed of her brilliant destiny.

As soon as the reply reached England, the King announced his intentions to his Council, most of whom were taken by surprise, though on the whole the decision met with approval. "Strelitz," wrote Falconer, "can no more draw us into expensive connections than Saxe-Gotha did before. If she is amiable in her temper and manners we may expect an age of less dissoluteness at court; for the example of the Prince will at least direct

[1] A. F. Steuart in "Last Journals of Horace Walpole."
[2] Vehse, "Gesch. d. Höfe d. Hauses Braunschweig."

his followers, and a sober-minded young man agreeably married is the least likely of any person to be extremely vicious. . . ."[1]

An ambassador was despatched forthwith to Mecklenburg-Strelitz ("if he can find it," smiled Horace Walpole), to make the formal proposal, sign the contract, act as the royal proxy in the formal marriage ceremony, and conduct the bride to England, where the King was putting off his coronation that he and his Queen might share it together. Earl Harcourt, once George's governor for six months, was the envoy selected, although he was hardly a polished specimen of the English nobility; but the squadron which was to conduct him and his royal charge to England was commanded by the famous Admiral Anson, and the select suite of equerries and waiting-women was headed by the excellent Duchess of Ancaster and the beautiful Duchess of Hamilton. The Princess was not to bring with her more than three German attendants, who were to occupy the simple status of personal servants. Those selected were two elderly duennas, Mistresses von Schwellenberg and Hagedorn, and a sensible and polished young man of the ducal household, a certain Frederick Albert, whose daughter, Mrs. Papendiek, afterwards left a memoir of Charlotte's court.

In connection with Albert a curious incident revealed certain traits of Charlotte's character. The young man was not very anxious to exile himself, but the future Queen "insisted," and when he found himself constrained to accept the post she further insisted that he must immediately marry a certain young lady with whose family he was very intimate. In vain he protested that he did not want to marry the girl, that the family did not expect it, that he could not afford such an imprudence, and, in especial, that the destined bride was below him in rank.

[1] T. Falconer to Charles Grey, Round MSS. H.M.C. (1895).

Charlotte recognized no inequalities of rank below royalty. She would have no sore feeling caused in Mecklenburg by her suite, nor scandal whispered in England. She undertook to provide for Albert sufficiently in England, and, in short, compelled him to satisfy her own standard of propriety. Married the couple were, but thenceforth Charlotte took no notice of her page's wedded status. The poor bride was left behind in Germany, and, as the promises were by no means promptly fulfilled, in Germany she remained for two years, till the kindness of private friends conveyed her at length to England.

During the brief interval between the informal and the formal proposal of marriage, Charlotte's mother died, but the English Court was too anxious to see the young King safely married to permit of much delay, and Lord Harcourt set out as arranged. His first report assured his own family that "our Queen that is to be has seen very little of the world, but her very good sense, vivacity, and cheerfulness, I dare say, will recommend her to the King and make her the darling of the British nation . . . she has a charming complexion, very pretty eyes, and is finely made; in short, she is a very fine girl."

Lord Harcourt reached Strelitz on 14th August (1761), and next day went in state to ask officially for the hand of the Princess. A grand feast was held, and one still more splendid on the 16th, when the official marriage ceremony was performed, the ambassador of course acting as the King's proxy. Charlotte perhaps betrayed some trepidation at the rapid proceedings: "Allons," said her brother, "Ne fais pas l'enfant, tu vas être reine d'Angleterre." He had made successful efforts to play a worthy part on this great occasion. On Harcourt was bestowed a valuable jewel; the Court received handsome robes, festivity was universally observed, and the Duke's munificence was admired on all sides.

Little seventeen-year-old Charlotte found herself a personage of vast importance. The Seven Years' War was raging, allied England and Prussia were at the zenith of their military glory, and the bride of his Britannic Majesty was the recipient of national and international courtesies.

The passage of the Queen of England—for so she became the moment the formal espousals were celebrated—created the wildest excitement along the route that she traversed. The people watched all day to catch a sight of her. The mischievous Prussian, Count Lehndorff, played them and her a sad trick. To amuse himself, as he sat waiting in his coach, he took out a portrait of his own mother, evidently a great beauty, and held it out to the crowd, announcing that it was the Queen of England. And very much impressed they were—"Look! one must be as beautiful as all that to be made Queen of England!"

The King and Queen of Prussia had sent two envoys to Perleberg to greet the bride of Prussia's ally, and she had to listen for half an hour to a speech from the one, but for only four minutes to Lehndorff, to whom she happily replied that she had grown up in sentiments of admiration for the Queen of Prussia, to which were added those of tender friendship now that she had the honour of becoming her near connection (Frederick II was George III's first cousin through his mother, Sophia Dorothea, daughter of George I). Count Lehndorff was much pleased; he was, however, less favourably impressed by the absence of munificence. None of the customary presents were bestowed by the new Queen upon the envoys and mayors who came to greet her, nor even in the very houses where she and her suite stayed. It was whispered that Lord Harcourt had been just as niggardly at Strelitz; save for a bracelet of pearls in

which King George's miniature was set, given on his behalf to the bride, no gifts appeared to have been made. So surprising was this, so incredible the idea that glorious and wealthy England could be parsimonious, that the young Queen was blamed, though Lord Harcourt was held the ultimate culprit. No doubt his stupidity was partly at fault, but it is curious to find this marked and unpleasant note of the court of George and Charlotte struck at the very commencement.

The journey lasted three days. When the broad Elbe was crossed and Charlotte entered her consort's domain of Hanover, she was hailed as Electress at the forest palace of The Göhrde, so long a favourite resort of her husband's ancestors, and found a splendid banquet awaiting her, prepared by a staff of cooks from Hanover. The schoolroom maiden, who had never till her marriage dined in state, had now to dine in public as Queen of England. After the banquet the little procession went on to Stade, the Elbe port where the royal yacht was in waiting. It was a wonderful boat, entirely gilt without, within all rich gilding, red damask, mahogany, and Turkey carpets. Here the English suite awaited their Queen, who kissed the duchesses prettily, saying that she hoped friendship might take the place of ceremony between them, and—"Are all Englishwomen as beautiful as you are?" she asked. The critical Count Lehndorff says that the Duchess of Ancaster was handsome, but the Duchess of Hamilton dazzlingly lovely, the fairest blonde he had ever seen.

Charlotte was tired out when she reached Stade, and could not receive the expectant company; happily next day was Sunday, and she was allowed to rest, and did not set forth till Monday.

At the harbour the Prussian eye-witness "found everything in confusion—servants running about with luggage, and waiting-women only half dressed, with

garments over their arms which in their haste they had not got packed. Finally came along an Englishwoman with an immense green taffety bag, containing the dress the Princess is to wear when she meets the King; the woman was showing it to everybody who wanted to see it."

Six red-and-gold boats conveyed the young Queen and her attendants to the yacht; as soon as she came within sight of Anson's flag-ship, the sailors manned the rigging, the royal band struck up, cannon saluted from land and sea in one terrific roar, and when she reached the deck the duchess and the admiral, Lord Harcourt and her own brother, Charles, sank on their knees to kiss her hand, and for the first time hailed her "Your Majesty." Her realm of England was reached when she set foot on a British ship.

The voyage was long and stormy, so Charlotte had ample time to study the comforts and splendours of her yacht (Horace Walpole had indeed been told that if its lavish gilding did not turn the Queen's stomach, *nothing* would. To which he replied that if her head was not turned she might compound for anything else). There was even a harpsichord in her saloon, in tactful recognition of her musical tastes. For a fortnight the ships were beating about on a stormy sea. Twice they sighted Flamborough Head, only to be driven back almost on to the shores of Norway. People in England began to feel nervous, especially as we were at war, not that there was very much likelihood of French privateers slipping past the English fleet into the North Sea.

During this troublesome passage Charlotte showed herself steadily cheerful, never frightened, and never ill, though her unlucky ladies suffered terribly; and she would play and sing at her harpsichord, leaving the saloon door open that her prostrated attendants might at all events feel no concern on her account. When at

length Harwich harbour was made, Lord Anson considered it wise to land his precious charge at once, rather than beat on to the Thames for the sake of the state welcome prepared at Greenwich. So that the official escort deputed to meet her were still anxiously scanning the river, covered as it was with every species of craft, in expectation of her Majesty, when the royal bride, weary, but in excellent health, landed with her considerably battered suite at astonished Harwich, early on 7th September. They were conducted to rest at Witham, the noble seat of Lord Abercorn, who was himself unsuspectingly in town.

On the next day, a sunny, sultry Tuesday, the journey to London was accomplished. The new Queen reached the capital by the unimposing eastern approach, but amid shouting crowds, for nearly every horse and chaise in London had set out for the Essex road the moment her arrival at Harwich was known.

Charlotte, sitting in the coach with the two Duchesses opposite to her, bowed gracefully to the people, and asked to be driven less rapidly that they might be gratified by seeing her. She was dressed now in the English fashion, described as "a fly-cap with rich laced lappets, a stomacher ornamented with diamonds, and a gold brocade suit with a white ground." She was invited to have her "toupet"—the tuft of locks above the forehead—curled. "No, indeed," said she, "I think it looks as well as those of the ladies that have been sent for me: if the King would have me wear a periwig, I will; otherwise I shall let myself alone." [1]

Early in the afternoon the little procession passed through the city amid such a clamour of welcome and hurry as almost drowned the roar of the saluting

[1] But Lady North disapproved of her mode of drawing her hair tight over rollers so that the skin showed, "than which nothing can be more frightful" ("Glenbervie Journals").

guns, and at a quarter after three Charlotte reached St. James's.

"When she first saw the palace she turned pale: the Duchess of Hamilton[1] smiled, 'My dear Duchess,' said the Princess, '*You* may laugh you have been married twice but it is no joke to me.'"[2]

At the garden gate the Duke of York, the King's next brother, was waiting; he gave her his hand, and she jumped out with spirit, though her lips were trembling. The King himself met her in the garden, and his countenance is said to have momentarily fallen at the sight of this plain little maid. She would have knelt in homage, but he prevented her with an embrace and led her into the apartments, where she was received by the Princess of Wales and the Lady Augusta.

Little interval for rest was allowed to the traveller, who had learned with some dismay from her escorting duchesses that the wedding must take place that very night. She dined with the King, his mother, and sister, and had a private conversation with George, who seems to have done all the talking, telling her himself what she was to wear for the marriage ceremony, and giving her some direction as to her future conduct, which must have struck her with misgiving. "He told me," said his brother, William, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards, "he had given her a caution never to be alone with my mother, for she was an artful woman and would try to govern her."

The wedding ceremony took place in St. James's Chapel at ten that night. Charlotte betrayed her nervousness only once, when she emerged from her room alone to be conducted by her young brothers-in-law into the brilliant

[1] One of the famous Gunning sisters. She continued to be styled Duchess of Hamilton until her second husband, Colonel Campbell, succeeded as Duke of Argyll in 1770, after which she was of course styled Duchess of Argyll.

[2] H. Walpole, "Letters" (ed. Toynbee), 772, 773 (vol. v).

circle awaiting her. She was painfully agitated, and the good-natured Duke of York felt her hand trembling in his. "Courage, Princess, courage," he kept on saying as they proceeded, in what she felt to be a very comforting way, and she had almost recovered herself when they reached the royal apartments. "At first, when the bridesmaids and the court were introduced to her, she said, 'Mon Dieu, il y en a tant, il y en a tant!' She was pleased when she was to kiss the peeresses; but Lady Augusta was forced to take her hand and give it to those who were to kiss it, which was prettily humble and good-natured."

The wedding procession was headed by a long line of peers and peeresses. Charlotte was led by the Duke of York and Prince William; "the Archbishop married them; the King talked to her the whole time with great good humour, and the Duke of Cumberland gave her away."

Charlotte's equanimity was not increased by her dress, which had been designed without much consideration for the small personage who was to wear it. She was "in white and silver; an endless mantle of violet-coloured velvet, lined with ermine, and attempted to be fastened on her shoulder by a bunch of large pearls, dragged itself, and almost the rest of her clothes, half-way down her waist. On her head was a beautiful little tiara of diamonds, a diamond necklace and a stomacher of diamonds, worth three score thousand pounds, which she is to wear at the Coronation too." These splendid jewels were the King's gift to her, and probably afforded her real pleasure, for even in old age she is said to have retained a fondness for jewels.

While the marriage service was proceeding, a brilliant company was assembling in the drawing-room, and at eleven the procession re-appeared, stayed a very short while for the assembled throng to see it, and then

passed on to the private apartments. Here (owing to the not unusual mismanagement of the royal household) supper was not yet ready, and Charlotte sat down to a harpsichord and played and sang with a wonderful composure, which won the approval of all present.

Horace Walpole describes Charlotte as "not tall, nor a beauty; pale and very thin; but looks sensible and is genteel.[1] Her hair is darkish and fine; her forehead low, her nose very well, except the nostrils spreading too wide; her mouth has the same fault, but her teeth are good. She talks a good deal and French tolerably; possesses herself, is frank, but with great respect to the King." Walpole was charmed with an anecdote of this first supper-table: "They talked of the different German dialects; the King asked if the Hanoverian was not pure —'Oh no, sir,' said the Queen, 'it is the worst of all,' —she will not be unpopular."

Her natural good spirits helped her to conceal any timidity; she talked away, now in French, now in German, to the King, the Duke of York, and their uncle, Cumberland; but she could not bring herself to give the signal for breaking up the party and retiring. The Princess of Wales made no move and gave no help; it was the kindly Duke of Cumberland who came to the rescue, and frankly told his nephew that the Princess Augusta and himself were sleepy. The old-fashioned public visit to the royal bedroom was discarded on this occasion, at Charlotte's express request, and never again revived.

The next day's Drawing Room formed the new Queen's formal introduction to society, when all who came were presented to her. It was observed how handsome and

[1] "Genteel—what a pretty word! . . . like a well-made dish composed of every good thing without tasting of any one particularly . . . in plain English it is an *ease* and a grace entirely free from affectation."—MRS. DELANY.

happy the King looked, talking to his bride almost the whole time, although amid the bevy of bridesmaids standing by was the brilliant Lady Sarah Lennox, "by far the chief angel." "It does not promise as if they two would be the two most unhappy persons in England from this event," comments the acute Horace.

A fortnight after the wedding came the coronation (22nd September), and London was dazzled with splendour. Unfortunately there was no one among the officials willing to take capable control of the arrangements, nor any member of the royal family who could venture to intervene uncommissioned by the King and his mother, and they seem to have left everything alone. The excellent precedents of George II's coronation were ignored, and awkward mistakes occurred. The preparations were not completed until the time fixed for beginning the procession, and then it was found that the chairs of state for the King and Queen at the banquet in Westminster Hall had been forgotten, as well as the sword of state. So that the ceremony, for which everybody was prepared early in the morning, was put off till noon; the heralds who had had to arrange the order of the procession, "were so ignorant of their business that . . . they advertised in the newspaper for the Christian names and places of abode of the peeresses. The King complained of such remissness and of the want of precedents; Lord Effingham, the [deputy] Earl Marshal told him, it was true there had been great neglect in that office, but he had now taken such care of registering directions that the *next coronation* would be conducted with the greatest order imaginable. The King was so diverted with this flattering speech that he made the Earl repeat it several times."

The poor young Queen was suffering from toothache and neuralgia, and felt nervous, as was shown by her begging that her German page, Albert, might be

placed where she could see him. This was done, and her two German ladies were placed with the maids of honour.

When the long ceremony in the Abbey was over, the dusk of the September evening was closing in. Westminster Hall, to which the procession must return for the banquet, had been left in darkness, from an idea that it would compliment the King not to light the candles until he appeared, the last of the procession. The spectators who thronged the galleries consequently felt as if they were witnessing a funeral, "scarcely anything being visible but the tall plumes of the Knights of the Bath, which seemed like the hearse." Upon the arrival of George and Charlotte, a splendid blaze of light dazzled the beholders, but it lit a banquet so meagrely appointed as to be quite unworthy of the occasion.

Much discontent prevailed. The steward, Lord Talbot, had left out all the Knights of the Bath and the Barons of the Cinque Ports, while the Corporation of London only obtained seats by administering a thinly veiled threat.

Lord Talbot acquired further ridicule when, in his official capacity, he came riding into the Hall to present the first dish to the King. He had carefully trained his horse to walk backwards in order to withdraw correctly from the royal presence, but so soon as the virtuous animal entered the Hall it recollected its lesson, wheeled about, and persisted in backing the whole way up to the table, nor had Lord Talbot sufficient adroitness either to turn the creature or to take it from the scenes. Dymock, the royal champion, however, "acted his part admirably and dashed down the gauntlet with proud defiance"; nor did any adherent of a lost cause step forward to take up the challenge. His life would probably have answered it, for the Londoners were momentarily in a ferment of joy and loyalty. Indeed, so much were they de-

lighted by the coronation, that the management of Drury Lane Theatre produced a sort of reproduction of it, and windows in the Lane let at threepence a head. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the great rise in prices noticeable during the previous twenty years was reflected in the costly expenditure on the coronation festivities. Horace Walpole thought it indicated the high-water mark of extravagance. At the coronation of George II and Caroline, his mother had given 40 guineas for the use of two rooms and a "scaffold"; a similar suite in 1761 cost 350 guineas; a platform which had let in 1727 for £40 now fetched £2,400.

According to precedent, the new King and Queen made a formal appearance in the City on Lord Mayor's Day, and watched the procession from the same house as their predecessors, that of the Quaker Barclay, opposite Bow Church, and it was on this occasion that Charlotte first observed the vehemence with which the Londoners could express their political passions. Pitt had just resigned, and in spite of the shock which his acceptance of a pension at first gave his admirers, the tide of his popularity rapidly recovered its height. As he drove along in the procession, the crowd paid him more than royal honours, shouting huzzas and thronging round his carriage, while the young sovereigns were received with only the slightest acknowledgement, and the coach of George's new minister, Lord Bute, was hooted and pelted. Even within the Guildhall itself the honours paid to Pitt equalled in fervour those rendered to the King and Queen. Whether Charlotte understood the scene may be doubted, though the sight of the huge, hysterical mob must have been wonderful to one fresh from the quiet decorum of little Strelitz. She was, at all events, extremely gracious to her hosts and attendants at Mr. Barclay's, and won excellent opinions both there and at the Guildhall feast.

The Barclays were quite captivated; the King met the Quaker young ladies at the door of the room, "and saluted us with great politeness," *i.e.*, with a kiss apiece; "advancing to the upper end of the room, we kissed the Queen's hand, at the sight of whom we were all in raptures, not only from the brilliancy of her appearance, which was pleasing beyond description, but being throughout her whole person possessed of that inexpressible something that is beyond a set of features, and equally claims our attention. To be sure, she has not a fine face, but a most agreeable countenance, and is vastly genteel, with an air, notwithstanding her being a little woman, truly majestic; and I really think, by her manner is expressed that complacency of disposition which is truly amiable; and though I could never perceive that she deviated from that dignity which belongs to a crowned head, yet on the most trifling occasions she displayed all that easy behaviour that negligence can bestow. Her hair, which is of a light colour, hung in what is called coronation ringlets, encircled in a band of diamonds, so beautiful in themselves, and so prettily disposed, as will admit of no description. Her clothes, which were as rich as gold, silver, and silk, could make them, was a suit from which fell a train supported by a little page in scarlet and silver. The lustre of her stomacher was inconceivable. The King I think a very personable man. All the princes followed the King's example in complimenting each of us with a kiss. . . ."

For a month or two unwonted gaiety reigned in the capital, to everybody's satisfaction; Charlotte was introduced to concerts, operas, plays, and was even taken to look at the fashionable crowd in Ranelagh Gardens. These pleasures she enjoyed thoroughly, new as they all were to her. The play and the opera were her chief delight, and she announced that she would go once a week to the latter; so, as the King's post-day (*i.e.*, from

the Continent) was Tuesday, the management of Drury Lane altered the day of the performance to Wednesday. The famous "Beggars' Opera," which in the last reign had been held almost for treason, seems by this date to have become a classic, and it was actually the first opera Charlotte witnessed. She was requested to name the drama first to be performed before her, and it was thought very pretty of her—choosing, of course, merely by the title—to select "Rule a Wife and have a Wife," and quite complimentary in the King, who chose the next, to bespeak "The Merry Wives of Windsor." It was now decreed that the Queen's birthday, really in May, should be celebrated on 18th January, since the King's was kept on 4th June, and on the first occasion the whole of the polite world endeavoured to betoken its loyalty by magnificence of dress, and a crowd of splendid peers and peeresses attended the Court their Majesties held on the day.

The first impression Charlotte had made was certainly favourable. She pleased the kindly, and somewhat amused the critical, by her readiness to talk in her "very tolerable" French, and in English, of which she soon acquired a fair command. She could make apt little speeches, and gave a few handsome gifts to some of her ladies very prettily. But she made no efforts to court popularity, and once had to bear a shocking experience of mob insolence because she kept the glass of her chair up, while she was being carried through the streets, as she was suffering from toothache. The crowd were disappointed, and openly expressed their contempt for her plain countenance.

Charlotte spent much of the winter of 1761-2 in completing her education. She used to read a good deal, besides working at music and embroidery, almost as if she were at home in the schoolroom, and in the evening her husband would read improving books aloud to her.

The best way to acquire a knowledge of England and the English would doubtless have been to cultivate friendly relations with the ladies about her. A certain number were attached to her household, and plenty of others would have been at her service had she shown a desire for their company. Many of these were endowed with good sense, high character, and excellent accomplishments, such as Lady Bute, the new Prime Minister's wife, or the Duchess of Ancaster, the Mistress of the Robes. George, however, laboured under the double fear of annoying his mother and of encouraging political intrigue should any of these ladies become his wife's companions. The Princess of Wales, who ought to have introduced her inexperienced daughter-in-law to English ways, was only anxious to restrain her from acquiring any influence over the King, and seemed to extend to the whole of society the ban she had originally pronounced against the dissolute young men of London; while Charlotte herself, not yet at home in a foreign language, uncertain how to behave, and accustomed to do as she was bid, acquiesced in the quiet domestic life which her husband preferred, and the prudish restrictions recommended by her chief attendant, Madame Schwellenberg. This lady, as ignorant of England as her mistress, assumed an unwarrantable importance, and allowed nobody to approach the Queen unless first introduced to her. Her rooms adjoined the Queen's bedchamber, into which opened a private door only used by the King and Madame Schwellenberg.

Her regulations were by no means palatable even to her German companions, and English peeresses would not condescend to curry favour with a simple German lady, so different in all her ways and notions from their own caste. The result was that they ceased to make any effort to attend the Queen during her more private hours, and but little opportunity was offered in the public ones.

When the Court did rouse itself to give a ball, in place of the splendid entertainment which might have been expected, a "very private" company of about a dozen couples was assembled, made up chiefly of the King's brothers and sisters, the maids of honour, and the officers in waiting, so that people felt something of disappointment and even of offence.

The household of the young King and Queen was modelled on a modest, and even meagre, scale. Probably much of the good system of Queen Caroline's day had vanished from court after her death, but a certain dignity had still been maintained, and had not been incompatible with economy. No doubt it was necessary both to reform and to modernize, but the methods adopted unfortunately offended or inconvenienced a great many persons without relieving the public purse.

The Household posts had been increasingly used by the ministers of George I and II as a means of gratifying the cupidity of their supporters. In consequence the King's Civil List was heavily burdened with salaries to persons who gave little or no service in return. The cost of the royal household was excessive, and it was clear that, with the beginning of the new reign, changes must be made. But the Whig ministers would not tolerate any cutting down of the salaries, and the only other expedient was to reduce the personal expenses. George III, who had a real preference for privacy and a simple life, and cherished a dislike of the proud nobility, deliberately turned the household offices into sinecures, and, as years went on, surrounded himself and his family with servants of the middle and humbler classes, to the exclusion of the nobles and the greater gentry. The mismanager of the coronation banquet, Lord Talbot, was made Lord Steward, and announced that henceforth no meals would be served in the palace but for their majesties, the maids of honour, and the chaplains. All the

other officers were placed on board wages—a plan which obviously pointed to minimizing the time of their attendance at court, and abolished hospitality together with waste. This was regarded as a most undignified innovation, of a piece with the use of sea-coal, instead of wood, for fuel, in the palace. When the King's Birthday Honours were being talked of, somebody said: "I suppose there will be no duke made." Lord Chesterfield replied: "Oh yes, there is to be one." "Is? Who?" "Lord Talbot,—he is to be created Duke Humphrey, and there is to be no table kept at court but his."

George III's first popularity vanished in a year, ruined not so much by the forced resignation of Pitt, as by the appointment of the Scottish Lord Bute as Prime Minister. For two reigns the Scotch peers had been notoriously the by no means disinterested supporters of the minister in power, and Bute was disliked as a Scot, as a newcomer, and as the most intimate favourite of the Princess of Wales. As he was also the supplanter of the idolized Pitt, and by no means a competent minister, all classes agreed in hating him. The mob howled, and the wits jeered. On the day of his first ministerial levée, somebody jammed in the crowd outside called out to know what was the matter:—"Why," replied a ready wit, "there is a Scotchman got into the Treasury, and they can't get him out." His town mansion was nicknamed "Holyrood House," and his patroness, the Princess of Wales, became the object of the most violent abuse. "We have Queen Isabel and Mortimer, Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk, every week," wrote Horace Walpole. "Last week they were so brutal as to call the Queen a beggarly Duke's daughter; it is shocking, for she has offended nobody and is far from being suspected of power; but it was to load the *Duke of Suffolk* [Bute] for making the match." Rank and fashion intimated its disapproval of the arbitrary ways of the King and his new

minister by omitting to honour His Majesty's birthday, so that when the fourth of June arrived, instead of the magnificence Charlotte must have expected, she saw only a very thin assembly, "as unfine as possible." Very likely she did not understand much of what was going on, and, as her brother Charles had come to visit her and was being made much of, she was probably happy enough during the summer of 1762, except for a brief alarm on account of the King's health.

The royal family had but just moved to Richmond for the summer when George fell suddenly ill, apparently of a violent influenza which was ravaging London, and for a short time there was even fear that he might succumb. Happily the anxiety was soon over, and tranquillity prevailed again long before the Queen returned to St. James's to await the birth of her first child. Society had for the most part stayed in town in expectation of this happy event, and great rejoicings took place.

Prince George, afterwards George IV, was born on 12th August, and the mob took it for a good omen that on that very day the splendid "Hermione" treasure, spoil from that Spanish galleon, was conveyed through the streets of the City to the Bank. The pride and joy of the young King were extreme. He bestowed the magnificent reward of £500 on the lucky messenger who brought the news, and ordered the greatest magnificence to be displayed at the christening of the heir to the crown. No such occasion had occurred since the days of Charles I. The ceremony was performed in St. James's, and, with a curious combination of publicity and privacy, the Queen's bed was placed in the state drawing-room, that the peeresses might be received by her, but on the other hand, no intimation was made to them, so that scarcely any came.

Before the baby Prince was a fortnight old, visitors of sufficient standing were allowed to see him, lying in a wonderful cradle with a "Chinese fence" round it to

keep the crowd from coming too close, and confectionery and wine were handed to all who came, the wine alone costing £40 a day.

This great event warranted a few efforts of magnificence on the part of the sovereigns. A Chapter of the Garter was held at Windsor, which Charlotte saw for the first time, and very much admired; a new state coach was built, designed by the royal architect at a cost of £8,000, in which the King drove to open Parliament through a dense and eager crowd;[1] the ban was removed from masquerades,[2] and the King and Queen gave one at Richmond, though the Princess of Wales marked her disapproval by forbidding Prince William, just created Duke of Gloucester, or his brother, Prince Henry, to be present at so doubtful an entertainment, though their ages were respectively twenty and eighteen. The King and Queen even gave a few balls, but to very few persons, who were kept dancing till one in the morning and dismissed without supper, so that these entertainments were not very popular and gave rise to sneers at German pride and poverty.

Throughout this year and the next the King was doing all that occurred to him to give pleasure to his wife. Her brother Ernest was invited to visit her, as well as Prince Charles, and the Order of the Garter was sent to her elder brother, the Duke, together with a costly gift of Chelsea china, which she and the King took a personal interest in ordering: it included not only a dinner set, and tea and coffee "equipages," but candlesticks and epergne, and it cost £1,200. George III perhaps owed something to his wife's family, for the splendid marriage which she had made had involved the sacrifice of her elder sister. Neither the Court of Strelitz nor the King

[1] *Cf.* H.W., 858 (v).

[2] The clergy had induced George II to prohibit these licentious entertainments after the earthquake of Lisbon.

of England regarded it as possible that the Queen's sister could marry a British subject, and though the Duke of Roxburghe was ready to relinquish his native land and live in Mecklenburg, and the Princess was really attached to him, the match was vetoed, and she was obliged to remain single for life. The other members of the family, however, gained something by Charlotte's splendid marriage. A pension (on the Irish exchequer) was paid to the Court of Strelitz; Prince Charles was given the pleasant appointments of Field Marshal and Governor of Hanover, which last he held till he succeeded as Duke at Strelitz, to the exclusion of George's own brothers; Prince Ernest practically lived in England for several years, quartered in St. James's Palace or at Kew, and Prince George was provided for in the Hanoverian army. Even the ladies who had vainly expected to accompany Charlotte to England, are stated to have had a *douceur* bestowed upon them.

Charlotte was, in truth, singularly fortunate in her consort. George's strong sense of religion and love of domestic life made him an admirable and faithful husband. Whether he had ever sown even a mild species of wild oats is doubtful to this day, for the legend of the "fair Quaker," Hannah Lightfoot, can be neither proved nor disproved. Contemporary gossip, with some marks of probability about it, points to some love passages between her and the young prince (in 1755 aged seventeen),[1] but there is no real evidence for anything further. The sole authentic romance connected with George III is the slender one of his famous early *penchant* for Lady

1 Hannah Lightfoot, eight years older than George, had married Isaac Axford in 1753. Two years later she had "absconded from" her husband, and the Society of Friends declared her expelled from membership in 1756. It was never known what had become of her, and Axford remarried in less than six years. *Cf.* "Notes and Queries," 10th series, viii, p. 321, and subsequent papers.

Sarah Lennox, and this incident, occurring just on the eve of his marriage, gave some cause, no doubt, for apprehension. Lady Sarah was radiantly beautiful and very fascinating in manner; Charlotte was plain and small, and rather commonplace. It would seem impossible that she should not soon have become acquainted with an affair so well known, and by which George's brothers and sisters were so much impressed that long years afterwards they recalled with interest anecdotes of the King's early passion.

Lady Sarah was the beautiful youngest sister of the 3rd Duke of Richmond, and had been seen at court since she was thirteen. This was by the command of old George II, who had once been delighted with her pretty face and quaint ways when, as a little child, she had wished to play with him in Kensington Gardens. On her return from school, therefore, the lovely girl was brought to the Drawing Room, whereupon the old King began to joke and tease her as if she were still a little child. The poor girl could not conceal her confusion, and the sight of so much beauty and modesty in distress made a deep impression upon the King's grandson, which was only increased by further acquaintance. At the date of his accession Lady Sarah was only fifteen, but her matchless beauty was already acclaimed, and as the sister of a great peer and the petted sister-in-law of the prominent statesman, Henry Fox, it was natural that she should be asked by the Princess Dowager to the select little court balls. Thus George had opportunities, of which he made the most, of talking to the lively beauty in a manner so much too solemn for flirtation that her relatives might almost be excused for taking it seriously, especially when the King sent, by Lady Susan Strangways, what seemed to be a plain hint of matrimonial wishes. Next time Lady Sarah appeared he asked for her answer: "What do you think of it? Tell me, for my happi-

ness depends on it." "Nothing, Sir," replied the careless girl. "Nothing comes of nothing," cried George pettishly, and he left her abruptly. In spite of this untoward check, however, the distress which the monarch showed when Lady Sarah met with an accident in the hunting-field apparently encouraged the ambitious Henry Fox to imagine that so romantic a match might really take place. Had not Tudors and Stewarts, to say nothing of Plantagenets, intermarried with the English peerage? and he professed to be surprised when he discovered that his patron in the royal family, the King's uncle, Cumberland, frowned on the affair, manifesting "so much ridiculous German pride." Lady Sarah was carefully coached in the answers she must make next time, but she had missed the golden moment, and negotiations with Mecklenburg were already in progress. This, however, was not known outside the royal family. George could not deny himself the pleasure of conversing with the beauty, and even so late as the middle of June (1761), when a definite understanding with the Duke of Mecklenburg had been reached, he continued to talk like a lover, and Lady Sarah thought he was making her an offer of marriage. In the hearing of her sister, Lady Kildare, he made to her appeals for a hearing so urgent as to be explicable only on the supposition that more formal proceedings were to follow. But at the next Drawing Room when the King came to talk to her, his sister, Princess Augusta, and her lady-in-waiting burst out laughing in Lady Sarah's face. They knew that the Council had just been summoned to hear the King's announcement of his approaching marriage with Princess Charlotte. The young lady had soon the mortification of hearing herself called "poor Lady Sarah," and of finding that the Princess Augusta, in her compassion, "would be so fond of my sister and I, nothing ever was like it." Fortunately she was not herself ambitious of either a right or a left handed mar-

riage with royalty, and was quite able to feel satisfaction in shining at the royal wedding.

That the conceit or pride even of Foxes and Lennoxes could have dreamed such a marriage possible illustrates the lofty ignorance cherished by English magnates for continental customs. It did not occur to them that ancient English precedents were meaningless to their Hanoverian sovereigns. Much later than 1760 an alliance between a Gordon-Lennox and a cadet of a minor German house is stigmatized in Germany as *morganatic* and to fancy that a youth so obedient to his haughty mother would venture to perpetrate a misalliance was absurd. George, no doubt, had been carried away at first. He may have had a momentary thought of creating a law for himself, but Lady Sarah, preoccupied at the time with a flirtation of her own, had not fallen into his arms, and Bute had little difficulty in bringing the King to relinquish his dream. A letter to him from the King is said to be still preserved,[1] in which George owns himself convinced that it is impossible for him to propose marriage to Lady Sarah Lennox, and begs Bute therefore to provide him quickly with a suitable bride. His subsequent attentions, then, were without a serious aim. Probably, in his ignorance of the world, he supposed himself engaging in a fashionable flirtation. He was certainly quite sufficiently master of himself to desist from this amusement the moment Charlotte's arrival made it improper. "He liked Lady Sarah as much as he could like any woman," said his brother Gloucester afterwards, yet when Charlotte arrived, "he appointed how the bridesmaids should hold her train, and named Lady Sarah with as much indifference as if it was the first time of his seeing her too." Here, then, closed this brief and pale romance, leaving Lady Sarah little reminiscence of

[1] "Notes and Queries," 10th series, viii, p. 387.

her sovereign's early tenderness save a delighted conviction that his sister, the proud Princess Augusta, resented it bitterly. Lady Sarah rejoiced to learn that the very mention of her name stirred emotion in that quarter at least. "Bunbury," said the Princess, on some occasion when that name happened to be mentioned, "I fancy I must know the name?" "Surely your Highness must have heard of Mr. Bunbury who married Lady Sarah Lennox." "At which Miss Augusta coloured up so violently and gave no answer that poor Miss H. was like to be in histerricks; did you ever hear of such a toad as 'tis!"[1]

Lady Sarah bore no manner of ill-will to the King's bride, and she gives a testimony which is certainly of some weight as to the impression she made: "The Queen" (she wrote in December 1764) "dresses absolutely better than *anybody* and looks very well; she speaks English perfectly well and is civiler then you can conceive."

Attempts have been made to show that Charlotte felt some alarm upon the score of her husband's early amours and their possible results; but these stories come from books of gossip wholly unworthy of credit; to give one instance, the best attested incident is that the Queen in 1787 caused a certain young man named Ritson to be sent out to India with an intimation that the Governor-General must "do something" for him. He was believed to be "an illegitimate descendant of Frederick Prince of Wales," and the Queen "was distressed" on account of him; both of which statements might perfectly well be true without George III being dragged into the business at all.

[1] Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox.

CHAPTER II

THE ENGLISH ROYAL FAMILY, 1760-1767

THE family which Charlotte entered on her marriage was numerous and not very easy to establish friendly relations with, even though manners and language presented little difficulty. The King himself, young, tall, and handsome, seemed all that a young bride could dream of. Endowed as he was with a musical voice and a naturally pleasant manner, his attractiveness only increased on acquaintance, for his morals were pure and his temper kindly; he was devout and possessed by a strong sense of duty; he was a most dutiful son to a mother who had bestowed on him no great marks of tenderness or consideration, and he was prepared to be a kind and true husband to the plain little girl whom that mother had selected for his wife.

The King, however, was remarkably different in most of these respects from the rest of the family. His four brothers, Edward, William, Henry, and Frederick, then aged respectively twenty-one, eighteen, sixteen, and eleven, were noteworthy rather for the absence of any grace or graces, tiresome and idle in boyhood, boisterous and ignorant when they grew to manhood: "the best-natured young asses in the world," as their candid aunt, Princess Emily, once said. Their sister, Augusta, the eldest of the family, was a high-spirited and somewhat ambitious woman, disposed to arrange everybody's concerns, and but little love was lost between her and

the hesitating, unoriginative George. Caroline, the youngest of the family, was a pretty, bright little girl of ten, destined to a luckless marriage (in 1766).

In the background stood the King's uncle and aunt. "The sensible, *English* Duke of Cumberland, . . . for ever doing noble and generous actions," was a man not unpopular, outside the army, and the only really capable member of the royal family, by whom he was pointedly neglected. Princess Emily, grimly sensible how much better she could have ordered courts and cabinets than either her father or her young nephew, was now relegated to the backwater of politics and society, and lived in dignified private retreat, content to relieve her mind by an occasional sarcasm.

The dominant influence in the royal family was that of the King's mother, the dowager Princess of Wales, and the influence which she possessed was out of all proportion to her talents and character. She had come to England, a girl of seventeen, like Charlotte, as the bride of Frederick, Prince of Wales. For fifteen years she had been his docile creature, quietly tolerating his mistresses in her immediate circle, obediently trusting in his servants and detesting his enemies, until, on his death, it became evident that she had adopted his factious principles in all seriousness, and considered it a duty to intrigue against her father-in-law, to be rude to the Princess Emily, to asperse the Duke of Cumberland, and to encourage at her little court all the schemers and sycophants patronized by her husband. The wits had jeered when the Prince died:

> as it only is Fred,
> Who was alive and is dead,
> There 's no more to be said!

But Frederick was not to be altogether forgotten. His narrow-minded widow succeeded lamentably well in developing his programme. She clung doggedly to a set of

personal grievances, mostly imaginary, and would enlarge on her "wrongs" even to so unreliable a follower as Bubb Dodington. It was very mean of George II, she would repeat again and again, not to pay her husband's debts, "and such inconsiderable debts too," *only* some £160,000, while all the time the old king was saving, "putting money of *ours* in his pockets." Nevertheless, the Princess's jointure was extremely handsome—she was receiving £64,000 a year—and but little of it was expended upon her children, the meagreness of whose education was notorious. She, too, was supposed to be saving vast sums, yet when she died but very little, either in money or jewels, was found by her children. Either she gave a great deal to her Saxon relatives, or the gossip which pointed to her as the source of the Earl of Bute's rapid accumulation of wealth was true. The Princess had one talent: she had known how to acquire and to keep over her slow, pious, shy, and dogged eldest son an influence which she never lost, although he recognized and resented it. She had managed to debar him from almost all intercourse with the grandfather and the uncle who would so gladly have made friends with the lad. If the old king wanted to see him, she would warn her son that it was in order to bias him, to intrigue against herself, or to cast a slur on his father's memory. Of the Duke of Cumberland, whom she misunderstood so grotesquely (she once told Dodington that if the King should die she should *soon have him trotting on all fours* to her), George was trained to be suspicious to the verge of fear. The boy was on some rare occasion at Windsor, when his uncle tried to amuse him by showing him the old weapons in the armoury. He happened to take down a sword, when his nephew started, stepped back and changed colour. The Duke was deeply hurt: "What can they have told the boy about me?" he cried indignantly.

It was part of the Princess's settled grievance that the ministers of George II did not consult her on diplomacy or war, and did not offer places and peerages to her husband's crew of flatterers. She expressed a quite noble indignation that she was not made privy to the secret instructions issued in 1755 to Admiral Hawke. Yet, with all her sense of neglected importance, she never paid attention to the weighty task which was entrusted almost wholly to her, the education of the heir to the crown. George II had in early manhood suffered bitterly from the forcible detention from him of his children, and neither Frederick's conduct, nor the petty insolence of Frederick's widow, could induce him to rob the parents of their child. Official tutors were of course appointed, but the young Prince was incited by his mother to slight Lord Waldegrave, the honest and competent governor whom his grandfather succeeded in placing at his side, but whom the Princess managed to drive into resigning; and the sub-tutors, who were his real instructors, were the tools of his mother's intrigues, satisfied with winning the future monarch's favour by flattering his pride, while they disgracefully neglected the education of all the young princes.

When at length the abuse became so notorious that open inquiry was made and the tutors changed, the Princess contrived to be equally aggrieved that, on the one hand, Andrew Stone should ever have been appointed sub-tutor, "since she believed him a Jacobite"; or that, on the other hand, any objections should be entertained towards a man with whom she and her dead husband had been satisfied for so long. Stone, indeed, continued to form one of her private court, until he was further provided for by a good post in Queen Charlotte's.[1] Even Dodington once ventured upon a wish

[1] His brother had obtained the primacy of Ireland, and was virtual ruler of that kingdom for many years.

that "the Prince conversed familiarly with more people of a certain knowledge of the world." The Princess agreed: it was to be wished he saw more company, "but who of the young people were fit? She wished he had acquaintance older than himself, but she durst not recommend for fear of offence. When, in a year or two, he must be thought to have a mind of his own, she hoped he would act accordingly."

In the meantime the future King saw and learned nothing of his royal responsibilites. Kept close to his mother's side at Kew or Carlton House, he formed a habit of trusting the few who were always deferential and to whom he need not fear to betray his ignorance—Stone, and Bute, and Bute's industrious, obsequious secretary, Jenkinson. He was not even allowed to make a journey to Portsmouth with a cabinet minister to see the fleet, lest some "influence" over him should be acquired in the three days' absence. Far less might he entertain his grandfather's proposal that he should take up his proper position as heir to the crown. George II wanted the young prince to occupy the Prince of Wales's apartments at St. James's and Kensington, and accept an income of £40,000; the Prince accepted the income, but refused to agree to the rest of his grandfather's proposition on the ground that it would mortify his mother if he did.

But the full vials of the Dowager Princess's resentment were not poured forth till the King began to take what seemed tentative steps towards providing a suitable bride for his heir. He had invited two young Brunswick princesses, his kinswomen, to visit him at Hanover, and the Princess of Wales complained bitterly as soon as she heard of it; firstly, because their mother, the King of Prussia's sister, accompanied her daughters to Hanover; and secondly, because "surely he would not marry her son without acquainting her with it so

much as by letter." Surely not, thought her confidant, Dodington, since the King had always been polite to her. "It may be so," she conceded, but, giving her imaginary injury the benefit of the doubt, she proceeded to rehearse what she should say if he did: "She should let him know how she took it": she had eight other children to provide for, and "she hoped he would think of doing for them, and not leave her eldest son with eight younger children to take care of before he had one of his own: . . . he might have so many that hers could not expect much provision. . . . She thought the match premature . . . George was averse to it himself; the young woman was said to be handsome, and had all good qualities and abundance of wit, but *if she took after her mother she will never do here.*" It was clear that George was to be told to refuse any such proposition, and the King went no further.

In much the same style would the Princess sometimes lament the short-comings of her eldest son, and say that she knew him to be ill-informed, ignorant of the world, shy, and backward. She did not appear to reflect that she must, in that case, lie open to the suspicion of having deliberately stunted his mind. She continually admonished him of his duty to his father's friends: what would his father have felt could he have thought his son would be ungrateful to them? The vain and inexperienced Bute, the intriguing Stone and Jenkinson, the time-serving Dodington, were to be accepted as George's natural counsellors. The precept of the last-named for obtaining a good peace to end the Seven Years' War was to withdraw all our troops from the various scenes of war, and leave Hanover open to the enemy, "to show that we are in earnest"! The one thing George learned from them and their like was a belief in his own infallibility, and a distrust of all the authorized leaders of political opinion. "George, be King," his mother is said to have dinned

into his ears, with that steady repetition which impresses the dull and obstinate mind. There is a legend, with much semblance of truth about it, that Stone, a practised politician of some ability, had surreptitiously provided his pupil with a copy of Bolingbroke's treatise, "The Idea of a Patriot King."[1] Certainly his influence had helped to imbue George with "high prerogative" notions. Lord Waldegrave had found him as a boy "uncommonly full of princely prejudice contracted in the nursery, and improved by the society of bedchamber women and pages of the backstairs"; it was impossible to try to educate him "unless by talk and as it were by accident."

In the character of George III appear many of the traits which marked his immediate predecessors. He possessed the absolute personal courage of his house. When he liked he could evince the good-humoured friendliness of his father, Prince Frederick. His passion for a comfortable privacy in domestic life, his despotic control over his own family and household, his sometimes excessive kindness towards persons of a poor or menial class, together with frequent harshness to persons of more aristocratic degree—these are traits recognizable in George I and George II, and in Prince Frederick also, but intensified in their successor. He resembled George II, too, in love of personal activity and slowness of mental initiative, as well as in devotion to detail and dislike of altering accustomed routine. Government, in his view, dealt entirely with details, all equally important, all to be settled by himself on precedent, and King Log would have been his ideal could only the waters of his empire have been kept stagnant.

George III differed from his two predecessors on the throne chiefly in his virtuous private life, and in his deliberate intervention in politics. Coming to the throne

[1] It was not yet published, but Pope had printed some copies privately, and not all of these were called in.

young, and educated on a narrow principle of "divine right," he could hardly be expected to contemplate the system of government at that time held constitutional in England with the cynical equanimity of George I, or the helpless disgust of George II. He saw, as they did, that power was monopolized by a knot of magnates, who exploited it, to a degree perhaps never before witnessed in this country, for the benefit of their own families. From the beginning of his reign, therefore, he set himself to destroy the oligarchy and recover the influence lost to the crown since the death of William III.

Had George III found capable servants and made his will felt in measures which eased public burdens, he might easily have reaped the approval tardily and grudgingly bestowed on him after chance had brought Pitt to his aid. But, like Charles I or Richard II, George could think of no way of fighting his opponents but on their own ground. He had nothing to add to the latter-day-Whig conception of government as the business of conferring places upon persons. He had no policy. A few principles he had, to which he clung heroically: that war was wicked—unless, indeed, it arose from his own action: that the King was in a position of sacred responsibility and that resistance to him was a species of sacrilege: that ministers were his servants, and that independence in them and opposition to them were also a species of sacrilege; whence it followed that unbending resistance was the sole attitude possible in the King towards anybody—from Wilkes to Napoleon, from the voters of Windsor to the American people—who should be so wicked as to oppose royal authority and the ministers who represented it. As time went on this sense of royal authority and responsibility became an obsession which helped to shatter his mind as surely as it did that of more than one Roman Caesar.

Realizing as clearly as any modern parliamentary

hand that words had become weapons of fence, George was perfectly ready to prevaricate in political business, although a deep sense of religion rendered him scrupulously truthful in personal matters. Thus, rather than palter (as he believed) with the exact sense of his solemn coronation oath, he was ready to face exile to Hanover, and did face the awful threats of mental derangement. Yet in the conduct of ordinary political business he would cajole his ministers with a semblance of cordial sincerity which only long experience taught them to distrust. Bedford, Grenville and Rockingham considered that the King had lied to them: the King considered that he had checkmated them in a game of skill.

But it was hardly the distinction drawn by George between the morals of political and of private life which made his reign disastrous, or the success which in the end attended his long strife with the great Whig families: it was his stupidity. Clever as he was in personal intrigue, beside his incapacity for rule, the ineptitudes of Bute, Sandwich or Germaine, are almost forgotten. He had been imbued in childhood with suspicion, and he always remained suspicious of the man in office, of the expert who was not a mere servant, from George II to Admiral Keppel. He was suspicious of his mother, his brothers, his sons, far more of his ministers, of Chatham as of Bedford, and even of Pitt. It can hardly be said that he was suspicious of talent; rather he did not recognize the existence of such a quality. Of a possible choice between genius and stupidity, of a possible application of wisdom and skill in lieu of ignorance and clumsiness, to the conduct of life and politics, he was unaware. For him there was solely a right and a wrong side to everything, obedience occupying in politics the position of morality in private life, and of any other broad distinctions he was ignorant. The combination of incapacity with good intentions usually inflicts suffer-

ing, and George, like others of his type, never learnt anything from events. He regarded disaster as a divine chastisement to be endured meekly; he never supposed it could have any connection with his own orders or his servants' measures, and when he had placed a discredited officer in control of the army, a dissolute gamester in charge of the navy, and a sluggard at the head of the ministry, he condoled with them on the strange misfortunes which Providence was dealing out to them in America, and assured them of his own unfailing support under these sad trials. When even North and his crew could cling to office no longer, the King complained, as a deeply injured man, "Remember, it is you that desert me, not I that desert you." If industry and good intentions were all, George would no doubt have been, as he always saw himself, the lonely protagonist of Right in an unappreciative world.

With such a husband it was well for Charlotte that she was but seventeen, adaptable and dutiful, and devoid of political ambition. She at once transferred to her husband the implicit obedience formerly given to her mother and brother, and became completely his docile echo; indeed it seems to have been only during the first six months of her married life that her naturally lively spirits made themselves evident. "You seem," wrote old Lord Chesterfield to a friend, "not to know the character of the Queen. Here it is: she is a good woman, a good wife, a tender mother, and an unmeddling queen. The king loves her as a woman, but, I verily believe, has never spoke one word to her about politics."

The King—who once exclaimed to an insolent peeress "I don't mind *women's* politics!"—had been delighted to find so inexperienced and dutiful a wife. He determined that she should be trained by himself and owe nothing to any one else. He either kept her close to his side, or, when this was impossible, discouraged her from

seeing company. So did also the dowager Princess of Wales, from motives of suspicious jealousy, and Charlotte in consequence had many dull days. "Except the ladies of the Bedchamber for half-an-hour a week in a funeral circle, or a ceremonious Drawing-Room, she never had a soul to speak to but the King," until, on the birth of her first child, "the nurse and his governess, Lady Charlotte Finch, coming into the room was a little treat." Thus the Duke of Gloucester,[1] twenty years later, expressed his recollections of the early court of George and Charlotte, and they tally with the observations of others. Mrs. Harcourt remarked that this early training moulded Charlotte for life, and "accounts for the being still perhaps with less ease than one could wish it." It accounts also for the timidity of the Queen's character. "Coming over with great natural spirits, eagerly expecting to be Queen of a gay court, finding herself confined as in a convent, and hardly allowed to think without the leave of her husband checked her spirits, made her feel fearful and cautious to an extreme, and when the time came that amusements were allowed her, her mind was formed to a different manner of life."

It was some time before the King and his mother ceased to treat Charlotte as a child. George used to take her with him to Carlton House, whither he went daily to consult his mother and Lord Bute, and then leave her "shut up in the room alone for hours" while the three were holding the counsels which resulted in the dismissal of Pitt and in the Peace of Paris. Not that it was in the least the young King's intention to humiliate his still younger wife; he never thought of prolonged inaction for other people as dull, it was his ideal of life and conduct for all but himself. Charlotte's mortifications came from the Princess and the Lady Augusta.

[1] Duke of Gloucester to Mrs. Harcourt, "Mrs. Harcourt's Diary," Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society, vol. xiii.

Very soon after the coronation the King and Queen had to make their official and public recognition of the Church of England, by receiving the sacrament in St. Paul's. Charlotte's mother had made a request with regard to this occasion which the young Queen naturally felt to be a solemn injunction. It was simply that she would not receive the sacred elements wearing her crown jewels, but would lay them aside in humility. Charlotte asked her husband's permission: he, who had taken off his own crown when the sacrament was administered at the coronation ceremony, could hardly do otherwise than approve. But the Lady Augusta found out the Queen's intention, and was instantly stirred to indignation. She betook herself to the Princess of Wales, who interfered, lectured the King, and made him promise to order his wife to wear all her state jewels and so break her word to her dead mother. It cost her bitter tears.

But her gentle ready submission to George's will in everything won his heart. He became increasingly fond of her, and in a few years the slow and silent contest between Charlotte and the harsh Princess-mother ended in victory for the wife. The tacit struggle began after the King had been seized, in the spring of 1765, with a sudden and alarming illness. As this originated in a feverish cold, and as it was evident that the royal family were in serious anxiety, most people assumed that the King was threatened with consumption (which cut short the lives of a brother and sister). Within the palace, however, it was realized that a less common danger might be threatening; his majesty's mind seemed to be affected. His mother came to the palace and attended upon him most closely, herself giving all the needful orders, and acting as the sole intermediary between the King and the outer world. She allowed it to be supposed that she wished to shield her youthful daughter-in-law from distress, but Charlotte found herself almost set

aside, and had she not (as it seems) definitely insisted that it was her right and duty to be with her husband, she would have been totally separated from him. She was as anxious as the Princess Dowager to conceal the sovereign's predicament from the public, but she thought that she perceived, and her ladies said as much, that the Princess and her continual confidant, Bute, were trying to monopolize an undue influence over the sick King, and that it was from no good motive that the Princess refused to permit the Duke of Cumberland to hear any news of his nephew's condition, and kept the Queen in retirement. Rumours of the Princess's conduct and her supposed aims filtered beyond the walls of the royal home, and were further excited by the injudicious treatment awarded to the King when convalescent. He stayed in town far into the sultry summer, when ordinary folks had fled to fresher air; it must be, said the gossips, because the Princess Dowager, who had no taste herself for the country, would not let her son out of her reach, though another explanation might be found in the feud of the King with his ministers, and the negotiations which finally produced the Rockingham ministry. In the meantime Charlotte's distress and anxiety had made her ill, and Mrs. Schwellenberg, naturally enough indignant, thought the opportunity a good one for testing the Princess's authority in the royal home.

It is said that she advised the Queen [1] to make a definite assertion of her own position and claims, and that Charlotte at first entertained this idea, but fortunately took the wiser counsel of her trusty German page, Albert, who realised the position better and convinced her that time and patience would fight for her better than resistance. When the King recovered he showed more fondness than ever for his wife, but the Princess had learned

[1] This only rests on Mrs. Papendiek's statement, but Albert must have known the facts.

something of Mrs. Schwellenberg's views, and as she could hardly upbraid Charlotte for wishing to be with her husband, she complained to her son of the German lady-in-waiting as an intriguer and a firebrand. A sort of crisis in small took place. George was ready to please his mother by disgracing Mrs. Schwellenberg, and at first decreed that she should be suitably pensioned and dispatched back to Germany. This Charlotte could hardly regard as anything but a slight to herself, and she showed so much distress that her husband forthwith relented, withdrew his command, and simply administered a reprimand to the attendant in the presence of the Princess. Charlotte felt deeply hurt, though she had won the substance of victory, and she probably placed more confidence than ever in her duenna, as in one who had suffered for her. Mrs. Schwellenberg learned the lesson well. She saw that it was not sufficient to rely upon the Queen, the King must be placated also. And so well did she succeed that the King in a short time became almost as familiar with her as was the Queen, and considered her a peculiarly attached servant.

It was the King's illness which occasioned the attempt at a Regency Bill (1765), in which "the King's mother was stigmatized by Act of Parliament," the House of Lords omitting her name; and perhaps that occurrence rendered him the more anxious to gratify her in his household.

It seems at first sight strange that the dullness of the court was not lightened by the efforts of the King's brothers. But George's treatment of his brothers was not very friendly. There were four, of whom the eldest, Edward, Duke of York, had been educated with the King, and used sometimes to remonstrate with him on the tameness with which, though heir to the crown, he submitted to the restraints imposed by their mother. The next brother, William, four years younger, was

supposed to be the King's favourite, but almost the only proof was the bestowal of the first vacant Garter, an honour spoiled, to the Prince's mind, by Lord Bute having the second, and being installed at the same time. The Princess of Wales's younger children detested their mother's favourite, and declared that even George did not personally like him. "The fellow has thrice gone abroad, and returned without kissing my hand," the King characteristically complained to his brother. The Duke of Gloucester had been a gentle, even timid boy, and had felt the Princess's harshness painfully; the story is well known of her questioning him one day as to why he was so quiet. "I am thinking," said the boy. "Thinking, and pray of what?" "I am thinking, if ever I have a son I will not make him as unhappy as you make me."

Of much coarser fibre was the fourth of the brothers, Henry, who must have been uncongenial to George long before his dissolute life and his bad influence over the Prince of Wales gave serious ground for displeasure. The youngest brother, Frederick, who is said to have been a bright and attractive lad, died when he was but fifteen (1765), much to the grief of both George and Charlotte.

Whatever George's early feelings towards his brothers may have been, he had no sooner mounted the throne than it was evident that a gulf lay between him and them. In private as in public, George III was always the sovereign, and his family were to him merely the first rank of his subjects, any independence in whom would be derogatory to the dignity of the crown. Edward, Duke of York, had already been provided with titles, the Garter, and a small income of his own, by his grandfather, who was more than suspected of quietly encouraging the lively young fellow in more pranks than his mother at all approved. But the younger princes were wholly under their mother's control, and they obtained nothing from

their elder brother until they became of full age. The King and Queen did not encourage them to come to court, and their mother debarred them from friends and amusements, nor were they trained for any serious pursuit, although Prince William somewhat affected the army, and his brother Henry the navy. Worst of all, they were allowed no money, and were thus practically forced into debt. When, then, they reached the age of twenty-one, and were at last emancipated from their mother and the secluded pavilions of Hampton Court, they were already burdened. They were then duly raised to the peerage: William (in 1764) as Duke of Gloucester, Henry (in 1766) as Duke of Cumberland. Parliament settled upon each an income of £12,000, to which the King added a Rangership and a regiment, but they can hardly be said to have been given a good start in life, and they were steadily refused any active work or responsibility. The two younger were curiously ignorant even of the ordinary usages of good society, and they not unnaturally plunged with ardour into all the amusements, and too many of the vices, from which they had been so carefully secluded. Every place in town, Walpole observed, was become like a scene from Shakespeare. "Flourish: enter the Dukes of York, Gloucester, and attendants." It was a commentary on the Princess's mode of bringing up her children which was by no means lost upon the beholders.

The result was dire: the Duke of York, from childhood impetuous, witty, and reckless, became so vehement a devotee of pleasure as to alarm his family. The King kept sending him orders not to do this, not to go there, bade him come home when he went abroad, stopped his remittances, and was amazed to find that a younger brother of the King of England was nevertheless "somehow" supplied with money. There was no reducing York to the dull decorum required by George's conveni-

ence; he made himself liked wherever he went, enjoyed himself among the French nobility, visited everybody, danced "all night as hard as if it made part of his road," and finally, exhausted by his foolish energy, caught a chill and neglected it, was flung into agitation by a letter from George forbidding (so it was said) a visit which, in ignorance, he had already paid, fell into a rapid fever, and so, most kindly cared for by the Prince of Monaco, he pitifully ended "his silly, good-humoured, troublesome career," in 1767.

The Duke of Gloucester, more sober than his elder brother, and much more concerned about the debts he could not pay, soon withdrew from the wilder scenes of amusement, and, falling honestly in love with one of the famous beauties of the day, the young dowager Lady Waldegrave, found with her a more genuine happiness. The attractions and merits of the Duchess of Gloucester, Horace Walpole's favourite niece, are not sung by him alone. In beauty, charm, and character, she was no doubt worthy of exalted rank; she was an admirable wife to her first husband, the excellent Earl Waldegrave; since his death, the Duke of Portland had vainly wooed her; but she laboured under a certain stigma, which, though in no way her own fault, might reasonably be supposed a hindrance to marriage with royalty. Although Sir Edward Walpole had from the first acknowledged, and most affectionately educated, his children, he had been too much afraid of his father, the redoubtable Sir Robert, to dare to marry their mother, and the beautiful Maria, Lady Waldegrave, was illegitimate. It was not an age which set much store by legitimacy, except for what may be called technical reasons; but from the point of view of George and Charlotte, marriages between royalty and the English nobility were in any case impossible. As neither the income nor the position accorded to the brothers of the King could entitle them to seek royal

brides, George III must have assumed that they were not to marry at all; it was a system he afterwards extended to his own children.

As long as the King and Queen could suppose that Gloucester was living publicly with a mistress, they visited neither of the pair with any mark of displeasure; but the announcement of an honest though disparaging marriage brought down the royal wrath on their heads. The secret of this private marriage had been almost an open one, but while it was not publicly announced, nobody need so far be cognizant as to report to his Majesty. "William has wrote to me without mentionin his marriage," writes his eldest sister, "and I am very much obliged to him for it. I long to know where these Dainty Widows are to be Buried; if it's by Princess Amelia she will make a great noise at the raising of the dead."[1]

The Duke of Cumberland, after several discreditable adventures, had at last (in 1770), when he was but twenty-five, figured in a scandalous divorce case, and was condemned to pay a fine of £10,000 to the injured Earl Grosvenor. The King was greatly annoyed, but joined with Gloucester in helping the scapegrace to pay. Not long after Cumberland boldly announced a marriage which, unsatisfactory in itself, involved a kind of grotesque retribution upon the King which infinitely delighted the wits. Cumberland had been captured by a hoydenish widow of (to say the least) vulgar tastes and connections; Mrs. Horton was the sister of that Colonel Luttrell who had lent himself to be the tool of the King and the ministers in their undignified struggle with Wilkes. Royalty marrying into the Luttrell family, already amply paid for unscrupulousness with a peerage and a pension, was a spectacle as delicious to the opponents of the court as it was unbearable to the sovereign.

[1] "Intimate Society Letters," vol. i. "Brunswic th' 1 of Novembre 1772."

Cumberland was at once disgraced and forbidden to come to court, and the King's threats were so fierce that Gloucester's sense of honour would not allow him any longer to conceal his own marriage. When he too, with a quiet dignity, confessed that he had married a subject, George's wrath scarcely knew any bounds. Gloucester he had termed his favourite brother. Gloucester's wife was a woman of irreproachable conduct, and a favourite in the best society; his crime therefore clearly lay solely in the infringement of the *ebenbürtig* rule of German courts. Gloucester was longer and more completely out of royal favour than was Cumberland.

It is unpleasant to find Charlotte blamed, apparently with justice, for strengthening her husband's anger against his brothers, especially against Gloucester. She had never made advances to them, and it had early been remarked that the new system of etiquette introduced by her made it practically impossible for them to be received on friendly terms at court. No man but the King might, under any circumstances, sit down in the Queen's presence. It was a rule she hardly ever invited any one to infringe, except her own brothers, and sometimes her eldest son. The King's brothers were never invited to dine with the King and Queen, although the princes of Mecklenburg frequently had this honour. The severe simplicity of the rule helped to oust not only the King's brothers, but, as soon as they were no longer children, even his sons, from the Queen's presence, except upon rare occasions.

All that the King and Queen could do to mark their displeasure was done; the two princes were forbidden the court, and notice was issued that the royal servants[1] were not to visit them. Lawyers were instructed to investigate Gloucester's private marriage, to see whether it could not be declared null, though the Duke asserted that

[1] *I.e.*, Members of the household.

if it were he would marry his wife over again. When he was ill no inquiries were made, and his announcement of the birth of his daughter, Princess Sophia, was ignored, whereupon old Princess Emily presented herself in person at the christening to stand sponsor. The deeper pride of an older generation had no sympathy with the King's tyrannous spite.

Unhappily George III devised a mode of assuring his own autocracy for the future by the Royal Marriage Act, which was to weigh so heavily upon his sons. Henceforth none of the English royal family might marry before the age of twenty-five without the sovereign's consent. Even after that age they must, in default of the royal approval, give a year's notice to the Privy Council, and relinquish the match if Parliament made objection. Marriages contracted contrary to the Act would be null, and the parties would incur "the penalties of praemunire." This Tudor-like piece of legislation was caused, said his Majesty, by his "paternal affection to his own family," and it was carried through Parliament only by dint of exerting the whole Crown and ministerial influence. After some years the King forgave the Duke of Gloucester so far as to see him sometimes, to have his children provided for, and to borrow his house at Weymouth; but he would not allow the Duchess to be included in the provision, nor would the Queen ever permit her to be presented at court. Even when she died, many years later, Charlotte wrote pointedly that she "for one" did not blame the children for making as great a funeral for their mother as for their father, though it was, "of course," impossible that *any notice* should be taken of her decease.

Charlotte always considered her own descent superior to her husband's, and she was in youth, as she always remained, absolutely intolerant of unequal marriages and unsympathetic, to say the least, towards women who had

fallen into matrimonial misery, even when it was not by their own fault. The sad catastrophe of the Queen of Denmark, George III's youngest sister, which occurred at the same time as the *mésalliances* of Cumberland and Gloucester, passed without one reported sign of concern on her part. Even George acted too much as though he assumed his sister *must* be to blame, though he and Charlotte had had sufficient opportunity of gauging the King of Denmark's miserable character, when, in 1768, only two years after the marriage, they had actually permitted him to visit them without his wife.

The King's eldest sister, Augusta, also experienced Charlotte's unforgiving temper. She had wedded the martial Charles William Ferdinand of Brunswick[1] in 1764, and a good deal of indignation was expressed at "the disgusts shown to the Prince of Brunswick" by their Majesties. It is possible that some of the rudeness was less intentional than the result of mismanagement, such as the cold reception they found at Witham when on their way to Harwich. Their Majesties had refused Lord Abercorn's request to be allowed to entertain the bride and bridegroom, but had given such careless orders that not even fires and food were ready for them.

This was nothing to the treatment which the Duchess experienced when she returned (at the beginning of 1772) to England to watch over the last days of her dying mother. The Princess Dowager bore her long illness with a stoical fortitude, and the King and Queen were unremitting in their dutiful attendance. She died on 8th February, and round her funeral procession the mob rioted in the utmost indecency of joy. Within the palace Queen Charlotte bestowed deliberate rebuffs upon her sister-in-law, whom she never allowed to be alone with the King. Apartments at St. James's had been assigned to Prince Ernest of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, but

[1] Afterwards Duke, killed at Auerstädt, 1806.

the King's sister was told that no rooms were available for her in any of the royal palaces, and was lodged in a small house in Pall Mall. Charlotte treated her openly with such studied coldness, that the indignant Princess declared she had only endured it for the sake of her dying mother, and on the day after the Princess of Wales' death she was with difficulty prevented from taking her departure, as a protest. If one story, attested by more than one witness, be typical, Charlotte would seem to have lost both her temper and her dignity over a very simple matter. At a court ball on the Queen's birthday in January, the Duchess of Argyll had yielded her place to Lady Gower,[1] who had formerly been the Princess of Brunswick's Lady of the Bedchamber, in order that she might sit next her old mistress and chat with her. The Queen was so much annoyed, that a day or two later she rebuked the Duchess of Argyll before all her ladies: "I must reprimand you," she said, "for letting Lady Gower take place of you, as lady to the Princess of Brunswick. I had a mind to speak to you on the spot but would not, for fear of saying anything I should repent of, though I should have thought it. The Princess of Brunswick has nothing to do here, and I insist on your recovering the precedence you gave up. One day or other my son will be married, and then I shall have his wife's ladies pretending to take place in my palace, which they shall not do." Charlotte was not fond of the Duchess of Argyll, and perhaps seized an opportunity of annoying her.

The King's aunt, Princess Emily, had long ere this felt that the only dignified course for her was to withdraw altogether from court. The Queen, she said, pointedly neglected her, never speaking to her until she had first talked with several of inferior rank. When, many years

[1] Lady Susan Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Galloway, third wife of Granville Leveson, Earl Gower.

later, the King and Queen named their youngest child after her, people laughed and said it was in the hope that the Princess would bequeath her fortune to the child; but Princess Emily was not mollified by the very tardy compliment, and when she died in 1785, she left all she had to dispose of to old friends, to her nephews at Cassel, and her niece at Brunswick.

CHAPTER III

DOMESTIC LIFE, 1762-88; THE ROYAL HOME BEFORE THE KING'S ILLNESS

THE first half of Queen Charlotte's long married life was spent among scenes almost always the same. The annual change from London to the country palace at Kew, or even Windsor, did not cover a distance of more than twenty-four miles, and seldom in those twenty-five summers did she and the King adventure so far as to be obliged to sleep for a night or two away from home.

The town residence of their Majesties was Buckingham Palace, always in those days called the Queen's House, the predecessor of the present building. Their country home was, first, at Richmond, on the Princess Dowager's death (in 1772) at Kew, and after 1779 at Windsor, which became eventually the principal royal dwelling.

The coming of fifteen children between 1762 and 1782, and the care of their education, together with the claims made upon her by the domestic-minded King, left Charlotte few hours in a week, and not very many weeks in a year, to devote to more regal duties. And indeed her title to fame in the eyes of her admirers, then as now, lay in her contentment with the position of wife and mother and her exemplary fulfilment of its duties.

Buckingham House was the excellent choice of the King, who hated the cramped and dingy precincts of St. James's, and was determined, since he might not live wholly in the country as he would have liked, to dwell

at least amid private gardens. The noble palace of the Dukes of Buckingham had for years been popularly assigned as a royal residence. George II and Caroline had once wished to acquire it. George III now bought it from Sir Charles Sheffield, and rather later Parliament settled it upon Charlotte as her dower house as well as Richmond Old Park, and a jointure of £100,000 a year should she survive the King. The ancient dower house of English queens, Somerset House, was by this time too thoroughly dilapidated and absorbed by offices of business to be fit for its old purposes. It was necessary to provide properly for the Queen, as George's health during the early years of his reign appeared to be precarious, a fact which throws some light upon the quarrels over the early Regency bills.

The Queen's House, as it was called, was a cheerful red-brick building, quiet and private. On one side of it lay a small park with a piece of water, on another a fine garden, and there was a terrace which commanded a charming view. "From that garden you see nothing but an open country and an uninterrupted view, without seeing any part of the city, because the palace interrupts that prospect from the garden." Very few buildings as yet rose to the south-west of the palace, although, as George III would not purchase the adjacent fields, it became surrounded by houses which commanded the garden before his reign was over. Behind the Queen's House access to St. James's was given through the park or by the Mall, a broad belt of grass, with avenues on either side where coaches could drive under the elms, or foot passengers walk beneath the limes.

No great alterations were made in the house for their Majesties, except for the insertion of a fresh grand staircase, and of West's enormous pictures. But both King and Queen took a pleasure in adorning their home. They cleared away the fountains, and the statues with

which, in Versailles style, the gardens had been peopled, and remodelled them in the more natural landscape style which Queen Caroline had favoured. Indoors, pictures and books were collected. The Green Closet, Charlotte's private boudoir, was a rather plain room, simply furnished; in it she hung the portraits of her children, heads sketched by Gainsborough in their childhood. Queen Caroline's library was brought hither from Richmond, and Charlotte herself added to it modestly. Her recorded preferences were for works of religious instruction and illustrated books, but that she was in any further sense a "patroness" of the arts of engraving and water-colour is more than can be substantiated. She sometimes amused herself by copying a water-colour: "the shabbiest way of drawing in the world," the King would laughingly assure her; and she shared in the mania for collecting prints, when it was all the fashion to cut them out of books and paste them on the walls, and at Richmond she had a cottage erected of her own designing, entirely papered in this artistic style.

George III too, and with better judgement, added to the splendid collection for which an international public ought daily to bless his name. For though George, at all events in his later life, cared little for reading himself, he was, like most of his line, quite alive to the worth of scholarship, and he used to employ persons, judiciously chosen, to collect books and very often to read them for him, and impart to him the gist of the matter. This was probably the main work of those amiable, unfashionable scholars, some of whom appear in Fanny Burney's pages and on the Queen's salary lists as "the Queen's Readers." They read not so much to the Queen as for the King.

Everything about the royal household was styled the Queen's: the Queen's readers, the Queen's garden, the Queen's band and chamber-music, the Queen's carriages,

etc. This was chiefly for convenience' sake, that the royal couple might exercise a more personal control than would be the case if salaries were defrayed from the ordinary civil list. In those days of the Whig control (called by Horace Walpole's generation the True British Constitution) nearly every post about the royal household was annexed to some political department. The later years of the reign of George II (who surely ought to have been canonized rather than derided by the Whigs) had seen the monarch stripped of the prerogative of naming so much as a colonel or a bandmaster; thus the only way in which George III could contrive to order his own house as he liked was by sheltering himself behind his wife, who was credited with having the courage to reject, in 1765, the nobleman officially selected as her Master of the Horse, and to appoint the Duke of Ancaster, saying no minister should interfere in *her* family. The Queen's house was kept the more private as their Majesties held their formal levées and Drawing Rooms at St. James's, and their official servants attended them, as a rule, only at these. The old-fashioned, semi-private levée in the royal dressing-room (introduced by Charles II) had ended with George II. George III, who rose with the sun and liked to ride for two hours before breakfast, could not tolerate them:—"Oh yes, we have wars, civil wars; there is a campaign opened in the Bedchamber: everybody is excluded but the ministers, even the Lords of the Bedchamber, cabinet counsellors and foreign ministers: but it has given such offence that I don't know whether Lord Huntingdon must not be the scapegoat."[1] But after the first excitement society forgot all about it.

For ten years the King and Queen spent most of the year at the Queen's House. They lived "like turtle doves

[1] H. W., 772 (x).

together, bring up their children, play music, interfere with no living soul, and yet neither foreigners nor natives care for such a gentle, shy king, but call him *too good*."[1] The Princess of Wales liked her son to be within reach of Carlton House, and, in any case, Richmond was too small for the growing family of children to be housed there for long at a time. But, on the death of his mother in 1772, the King took possession of her house and gardens at Kew, and of several other houses close by, and formed a kind of royal colony where the entire establishment of children, nurses, tutors, etc., were established for the longer part of the year, until in 1779 they were transferred to Windsor, on a similar establishment. State business and receptions were confined to London (or, in later years, to Kew) and the private life adopted by their Majesties prevented either Kew at first, or Windsor at a later date, from becoming, in any sense, fashionable. Society did not follow the sovereigns, and Charlotte had no company but what her own family and immediate attendants provided. She took quiet strolls in the gardens, or drives with one companion in a modest private carriage, perhaps to see the King meet the hounds or set forth in chase after the stag—for he liked to hunt four or even five days a week.

Nearly all the houses round Kew Green, as well as those in and round Kew Gardens, were required to provide for the royal household. In the Queen's House there (old Kew Palace or White Lodge) dwelt the King and Queen themselves with the three eldest princesses. Close by was a house for the two eldest sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, another for Princes William and Edward, and a third for little Ernest and Augustus, and their nurses.

The rest of the houses had to provide quarters for

[1] Behrenhorst's Journal, 1766, quoted by Vehse.

physicians and tutors, for the head governess, Lady Charlotte Finch, for the chaplains and for other regular servants—musicians, ushers, pages, household servants, gardeners, and artizans, all of whom had either houses or cottages assigned to them at the royal cost, or else had to provide themselves with lodgings in the neighbourhood, often a difficult matter, for the stipends were not generous, and the Queen, who liked to be acquainted with the domestic affairs of her dependants, would express disapproval if her somewhat exacting sense of propriety was not satisfied.

The physicians' posts were no sinecures: both King and Queen were extremely anxious about the health of their children, as the tendency to scrofula, inherited by the King and his brothers from their mother's family, had reappeared in some of George's offspring, and Charlotte was always on the alert. To cope with it, and with the ordinary ailments of childhood, a staff of medical advisers took it in turns to live at hand and to inspect the children daily, order their meals, and sanction the day's occupations. Among the ordinary perils of infancy had to be reckoned, in those days, the smallpox, and Charlotte followed the example of Caroline in venturing upon inoculation. It was successful in every case but one: Octavius, the delicate thirteenth child, died at the age of four from the attack produced by the inoculation.

Charlotte always had a devout faith in doctors, and acquiesced in all the new treatments of the day, in the cold bath, or—a few years later—in the sea bath and sea air for such of her younger children as were delicate, and, with less happy results, in "the new treatment" of confinement in the same room for a cold or for the threat of consumption. Sensible old ladies demurred in vain; Mrs. Siddons' lovely daughters and poor Princess Amelia were alike made prisoners, Amelia, at all events, being almost pitifully anxious to be allowed to go out into the

fresh air: "but she has a cold and Mama would not suffer her out" with her sisters.

Under Sir George Baker, their regular physician, the royal family were tried with the old "heroic" treatments. When Elizabeth had whooping-cough she was bled severely several times in forty-eight hours, and given strong emetics: the poor girl was ill for many months. When Amelia had a cough she, too, was blooded and blistered, and as measles came out she was blooded again. "She is going on well but is uneasy," they report. Lesser disasters, such as faintness, or a fall off a horse, always entailed being blooded and often being severely blistered as well. Charlotte herself, however, enjoyed remarkably strong health, and was apt to regard delicacy or weariness as something probably blameworthy. It was certainly almost penalized.

In spite of or because of their doctoring, the royal children were generally healthy, and their handsome looks were a frequent theme of admiration. It was their father who especially insisted upon an open air life and simple diet in their youth. When he learned from the Duke of Buccleuch the merits of oatmeal porridge, to which his Grace attributed the good looks of his own bonny children, George forthwith ordered it for his sons. The young princes and princesses apparently only had two meals a day, breakfast and dinner; the latter was served at two, three, or four, according to the ages of the young people, and for the elder ones was followed at no very long interval by tea, drunk with their parents; but little or nothing of a solid nature seems to have been permitted during the latter part of the day. Bedtime came at an early hour. Breakfast was as a general rule served at eight o'clock; but if some expedition, such as a visit to a nobleman's country house, entailed a late breakfast (or luncheon), the usual early meal appears to have been omitted, to judge from the comical descriptions in

some of Princess Elizabeth's letters, and the gratified accounts given by noble hostesses of the zest with which the young visitors did justice to the good things set before them.

The daily proceedings of the royal family were known well enough to their humble neighbours, for Kew Green was open to all, nor had George III any repugnance to such simple, countrified publicity. He had the tastes of an old-fashioned squire; farmed his land in a business-like way, rather on the lines of skilful marketing than scientifically; he liked to chat with gardeners and farmers and old peasants, and the stories are too well known to be repeated of his absurd inquiries into dumplings, roasting jacks, etc. He really made a considerable hobby of mechanical pursuits, useful distractions for a man of his active brain, and, of course, was ridiculed as "the royal button maker." The number of small kindnesses, none so common in those ignorant, haughty days, performed by the King and Queen among their poor neighbours, are for the most part long since forgotten. They used to go for country walks together, at Windsor, attended by a single servant; and it was on one such occasion that they entered the cottage of an old woman whose dinner the King watched cooking by the twirling of a string, after which he left "5 pounds to buy a jack." Another day they sheltered from a storm in a cottage, where Charlotte discovered a starving family and sick child, all of whom were fed and afterwards fittingly helped on in their station of life by her instant and practical help. It was one of these cottagers who wished she could have offered "the lady" something fit to eat, but lamented that she had lost her pig. The Queen afterwards directed two fine porkers to be given to her, and delighted her by promising to accept a spare-rib whenever one should be ready. Very proud was the good woman, but when she made her appearance one day at the royal gates with the

choice joint, neatly packed in a basket, it was to learn that their Majesties were gone to St. James's. She actually trudged all the way with her present, because it must be eaten quite fresh, she said; though if one of the equerries had not discovered the poor soul being made game of by the servants, the Queen might never have heard of the incident. She at once gave orders to refresh and reward the grateful woman, and sent her home singing more loudly than ever the praises of her gracious queen.

A curious trait of the time is preserved in the account given of a farmhouse not far from the royal home at Kew, which provided the household supplies for the palace. A son of the farmer was a footpad and frankly avowed it to some who asked, saying: "blows and murders belong not to my gang, and if I am allowed to take my beer on the Green, and sit with my neighbours without being insulted, I shall take care that no harm happen here: I am well acquainted with the bearings of the place." So the thief was always well treated, and would even ask the royal attendants for any little thing he might want, sure of never being refused, on account of the gratitude they felt for their immunity.

The real business of Charlotte's life for some twenty years after her marriage was the management of her children, or rather of some of them. The possession of so numerous a family of course entailed a definite system of education, which, once adopted, was persisted in for the whole generation.

The first article of this unwritten code gave the education of the daughters wholly to their mother, that of the sons, wholly to their father. George III adopted for his sons a system almost the opposite of that which he had himself experienced. He removed the boys from the parental roof, placed them under masculine control, and

then left them to the unrestrained management of the persons whom he had selected, exactly as if they were departments of state business. Charlotte brought up her daughters exactly as she had herself been trained, keeping them under her own eye, superintending their lessons and their manners, and never permitting to them more liberty or society than narrow circumstances had originally allowed to herself.

The sons were educated in pairs, a plan which their respective ages naturally suggested. To each pair was assigned a staff of servants, governesses, and tutors, but over these less and less control was exercised by the King as his sons grew into boyhood and manhood. He chose men whom he thought suitable—obedient to himself—not members of fashionable or influential families, and then he left them alone.

There was a considerable difference between the treatment accorded to the two eldest sons and that of the rest. George, Prince of Wales, and his brother Frederick were from the first treated as princes; taught how to receive company and dispense favours; at ten years old they were brought to the evening parties, held twice a week, from eight till ten, and held a levée in a separate room. Unhappily, they were surrounded by equerries and pages, who very early tried to curry favour with the lads by initiating them into vicious amusements. It was characteristic of George III that he doted upon his children when they were little, but conceived a suspicious jealousy of his sons when they began to grow up.

Little George and Frederick, petted and indulged in childhood, the elder more especially by the mother and his junior by the father, were at the ages of nine and eight installed in a separate house at Kew or a special wing of the Queen's House, and soon after (in 1773), Carlton House and a wing of Windsor Castle (1780), were assigned to the Prince of Wales.

Frederick, for some reason his father's favourite, was early provided for as (secular) Bishop of Osnaburg, the see having been kept vacant for three years until it seemed decent to invest him with it, and with other preferments as well; and in 1780 he was sent to Germany, where, during a seven years' sojourn, he acquired more military and practical knowledge than ever did his elder brother, though he learned no better morals. A rake and a bully in his 'teens, the Duke of York was almost everything which George III detested, and never behaved well to him; but nothing shook the father's partiality. He only sent his favourite son abroad in order to withdraw him from "the influence of the Prince of Wales," regardless of the fact that Frederick's character was much the stronger of the two.

It was certainly not by Charlotte's wish that her handsome and charming eldest son was kept secluded by his father and treated like a child while growing into manhood. The King had early been angered by his son, partly because the boy was a coward, partly, doubtless, because he was extremely clever in annoying his father; he had once, when quite a child, revenged himself for being shut out of the King's dressing-room by crying at the keyhole "Wilkes and Liberty!" much as one of the younger sons subsequently strutted about the palace wearing the colours of the King's bugbear, Admiral Keppel.

The young Prince of Wales was unfortunate in his teachers. The principal governor, the Duke of Montagu, was oftener in attendance upon the King, with whom he was a favourite, than upon his pupil; the preceptor, Bishop Hurd, officiated only at stated hours for instruction and prayers. Except during the hours of study the Prince and his brother were in the company of their gentlemen attendants. It was common knowledge that these men admitted very improper company after

the day was supposed to be closed by episcopal prayers. The intrigue with "Perdita" Robinson (a popular young actress with fashionable experience) was deliberately arranged for the Prince at the age of eighteen, perhaps not his initiation into the course of heartless profligacy which soon became his principal business in life. The King knew that his son had a recognized mistress, and he is said to have paid some heavy costs, but he is not reported to have expressed anything beyond "annoyance," and he certainly took no steps to reform his son's household.

Charlotte, who grieved over the Prince's ill ways, had apparently abdicated as a mother where her sons were concerned. She never attempted to interfere. She had received several hints, and once at least a plain statement, heard in silence and ignored: the King had not mentioned it to her, was her reply to the over-bold servant, and therefore she could not interfere. In this, as in other matters, Charlotte made a rule for herself of dignified immobility, and then assumed that to abide by it was a duty.

Only when his son's conduct became insulting to himself did the King express grave concern; then he resented it, and complained of it to others; it was due to the bad influence of the Prince's uncle, Henry, Duke of Cumberland, to the bad influence of Charles Fox, to everything save the apathy and mismanagement of his parents. Even then the King had no resource but to curtail his son's income as far as possible, and to continue to debar him from any useful employment. Drink, gambling, and women were the results of George III's elaborate system of education, and the only apparent "fruits of being shut up in the palace of piety."

To protect his younger sons from the pernicious influence of their eldest brother, the King exiled them. William was sent to sea at fourteen, and kept on active

service (the great French war was proceeding) at sea and elsewhere for some ten years. Fanny Burney's amazing description of his rollicking return home depicts him with the manners of a jolly tar; she would have been very much surprised had her own sailor brother exhibited conduct similar to that which made the Duke of Clarence a stock jest of the lampooners.

Edward, the fourth son, was the unlucky member of the family. He was educated partly at Geneva, and sent to travel with a tutor, who kept him without pocket-money, and intercepted his letters home. Afterwards he was obliged to stay abroad for thirteen years together, and on his return, in 1798, his mother mentions the fact to her friend, Lady Harcourt, with the bare comment: "He bears a very amiable character abroad, and I hope he will have sense enough to see the necessity of supporting it in his Native Country." He was thirty-two before the King would create him a peer, as Duke of Kent, and every request he made for employment or for a better provision was flatly refused by George III and George IV. Yet he was one of the most dutiful of the King's sons.

The three younger sons, Ernest (afterwards Duke of Cumberland), Augustus, and Adolphus, were sent while still of school age (fifteen, thirteen, and twelve respectively) to the University of Göttingen. "Very good-natured, lively young people," they were pronounced to be. Augustus and Adolphus were not unpopular, and subsequently, when Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, obtained from their brother, the Prince Regent, rather better opportunities than George III had permitted to their elders.

Towards the maintenance of the six princesses the King was supposed to contribute a sum of £30,000 a year from his civil list, which formed the whole provision assigned for them. Whether he really paid over much of it may, however, be doubted, for in 1783 the Queen in vain tried "to bring about some Establishment or

Allowance for the Princesses,"[1] and to the end of her life felt them to be dependent upon herself. Their father never gave them any allowances.

The princesses were educated with the greatest attention, and every one acquainted with the Queen's system extolled it as little short of perfection. A constant personal attention was her ideal; she once pointedly rebuked a duchess for leaving her children to governesses, "I should not dare to do it," she said.

When the royal family were at Kew, and her own health permitted it, Charlotte would rise almost as early as the King and go to see the little ones bathed. At eight o'clock she and the King breakfasted with their three eldest daughters, Charlotte (Princess Royal), Augusta, and Elizabeth. At nine the princesses went to the schoolroom, and the little ones were brought to see their parents and usually to walk in the gardens with them. Then, unless the King wanted her, Charlotte would visit the schoolroom, listen to the lessons or music, and often be present at her daughters' dinner. To their behaviour and their dress, too, she herself gave particular attention. Late in the afternoon, when their Majesties had dined, the princesses would come to sit with their mother and draw or sew while some one read aloud. Before bedtime the whole family from the adjoining houses came in to pay their respects, and the King would perhaps go back with his sons himself and visit the little ones' nursery to bid them good-night.

Charlotte certainly spared no pains over the education of her daughters, and she deserves to be credited with the admirable result. The princesses grew up accomplished, gentle, and graceful, modest, even diffident in company, pious and charitable. Their close affection for one another and for their brothers, their long devotion to

[1] Egerton MSS., 1525, f. 80.

their father when he became blind and doting, their perfect attention to their mother, were acclaimed by all who knew them, and set to society a royal example neither superfluous nor customary.

At Kew or Windsor, as in town, the Queen maintained a little staff of preceptors for her daughters. The excellent Lady Charlotte Finch was at the head of the whole, though particularly belonging, at first, to the Prince of Wales, in whose house she always lived, though unable to exercise any real authority there. The sub-governess, Miss Goldsworthy, "Gooly," as the royal family familiarly called her, was always in attendance upon the princesses or the Queen, and was perhaps the most trusted of their servants.

The other teachers were foreigners, or half-foreign, for Charlotte clearly had a notion of combining the peculiar charitableness towards Protestant refugees now traditional in the royal family with a utility as to foreign languages. The Misses Planta were the daughters of a Swiss scholar who had been appointed a royal reader; their brother was provided with a post in the British Museum, and the learning of the elder sister caused her to be, rather oddly, appointed English mistress to the princesses. She died early, and then her sister, though far less accomplished and thoroughly commonplace, obtained the same position, and soon became a great favourite with the Queen, who really made of her, as of "Gooly," a confidential attendant. She was almost the only person, besides the redoubtable Schwellenberg, through whom it was of any use to ask a small favour, for Charlotte was extremely suspicious of even the mildest requests.

Miss Peggy Planta and Miss Goldsworthy hardly seem to have been fitted to be more than nursery governesses, but the rest of the staff were more adequate. They comprised Dr. Majendie, son of a Huguenot refugee,

who, as well as his son, later, was made a Canon of Windsor; de Luc, a Swiss professor of science who could scarcely speak English correctly, Mademoiselle Montmollin; a very fortunate Madame Lafitte, described as a "Dutch-French" woman who read German with the princesses and had secured in return, though an indiscreet and tiresome woman, £300 a year and a house; and, finally, Charles de la Guiffardière, Miss Burney's "Mr. Turbulent." This very lively personage was a great favourite with the Queen, whose rather elementary sense of fun his exuberant spirits suited, and he became a kind of licensed jester, even her daughters not venturing to resent the impertinences he sometimes inflicted upon them.[1] A married man, a clergyman, and—as her Majesty considered—a wit, he was in her eyes the very model of gentlemanly entertainment, though Miss Burney sometimes thought him rather vulgar, and a bore. The worthy Smelt, an English clergyman, belonged properly to the princes' side, but was frequently in attendance upon both King and Queen.

All these persons, like Miss Burney, belonged to the serious middle class; they had no connection with that world of fashion and politics which the King resented, and of which the Queen was, probably, rather shy, from her ignorance, while Charlotte was, like George himself, perfectly at her ease in this tiny court of commonplace worshippers.

Certain of Charlotte's principles in the matter of education are well instanced in the paper she drew up (November 1792) for the consideration of two assistant-governesses whom she was appointing for her younger daughters, when Lady Charlotte Finch and Miss Goldsworthy were beginning to feel their duties too much for them. One of the new assistants would have to attend

[1] *Cf.* Diary of Mme. d'Arblay, vol. iii, p. 225.

the princesses of an evening, "and when we are not in Town to come by Dinner and Dine and stay with them all Day; and when poor dear Gooly is indisposed to be in readiness to watch that they prepare themselves in the afternoon for what is to be done next Day. Never to pass any incivilities or lightness in their behaviour; and to tell me openly and fairly every difficulty they meet with, and when I am not present to speak to Miss Gooly who as sub-governess is the only Person impowered to direct, and who will ever be ready to assist them with Her Advice whenever it is necessary and who it will be their interest to Consult, as she hath known them ever since Birth and they are much attached to Her."

In 1779 the principal quarters of the royal family were shifted still further from London. The scanty accommodation of Kew had proved inconvenient, and the King had determined to build. His plans, however, required a small piece of land belonging to the town of Richmond, and this he wished to purchase. But economical and retired royalty had not made itself liked, and as just then the King was even more unpopular than usual, Richmond refused to sell the plot of ground. The building stopped, the money was wasted, the King took a vehement dislike to the place, and this directed his attention to Windsor.

Though apparently the natural home for an English monarch, Windsor proved to be in some respects even more inconvenient than Kew. The greater part of the castle had been assigned to the use of certain families whom the King, with his habitual good nature, would not suffer to be disturbed. He was content with the north and east wings for his own family, who in this case, as not infrequently, had to pay for the King's generosity. Houses near the Castle were hired or bought for the household, and one which looked into the Home Park became their Majesties' home, called the Queen's

Lodge, as distinguished from the more public apartments in the Castle. But the whole of the Park was open to the public, there was no private garden, and the cantonments for the royal children—only the Prince of Wales was lodged in the Castle—were too much dispersed to allow of the joint life of earlier years.

Charlotte did not at first like Windsor, and regretted Kew, but it was contrary to her principle to say a word to dissuade her husband from his wish.

Her life at Windsor was much like that at Kew, except that the King added the new habit of an evening walk upon the Terrace among whatever company chose, from politeness or curiosity, to assemble there.

This daily stroll of the sovereign, surrounded by his blooming children, in the midst of his people, speaking affably now and again to one or another, gradually, during the later years of his life, came to present a sort of idyll in the minds of his subjects.

Official and social duties were disposed of at the Queen's House in the winter, or, in summer, at Kew, where the King and Queen, with their eldest daughters and a few attendants, used to stay from Wednesday to Friday every week, in order to hold the Thursday Drawing Rooms, which in later years became fortnightly. From Friday to Wednesday they lived quietly at Windsor.

The even monotony of family life was no doubt soothing to the irritable nerves of the King, and a most edifying example to the nation, but it was deadly dull for the princesses. Even when they reached years of full discretion, very little change came into their lives. Their mother made to each a small, regular allowance, and inquired into the expenditure of it, according duly praise or blame. In lieu of a governess, a lady-in-waiting was assigned to each, and it was probably partly with a view to their improvement that Miss Burney was

annexed to the royal household. But they never moved from their mother's side, or were allowed any opportunity for independent action save a little private charity. Elizabeth, the cleverest of the family, was nearly forty before she was suffered to read any book which the Queen had not looked at first.

No pleasures seem to have been provided for the princesses, and, until the King's declining health occasioned annual visits to the south coast, the only ostensible relief from the routine of home studies was in a few rare visits paid to one or two trusted and friendly noblemen, by the entire family. For all this culture and elegance, acquired by so much attentive study, was designed to shine before no other eyes than those of the royal parents. Prince Frederick of Brunswick and the Prince of Denmark came in person to urge their suit, the one for the hand of the Princess Royal, the other for that of Princess Augusta; but the King, with unheard-of ill manners, after permitting them to come, and the whole world to know of their errand, bluntly refused the suit of both; after which, naturally enough, overtures from other quarters were slow in arriving.

The King told his brother Gloucester that he took no steps to "settle" his daughters because he felt sure that they would be miserable if they had to leave home; to marry them to subjects was of course out of the question; he added, more candidly, that they were the comfort of his life, and that he did not know what he should do without them. Gloucester, characteristically, thought some one ought to tell his Majesty how far from the truth was his belief, but had not the courage to do so himself.

When the Prince of Wales found himself likely to become Regent, he outraged the dignity of his family by hinting his intention of settling his sisters within the country, and once had the execrably bad taste to hail

the Duke of Bedford[1] (from whom he wanted to borrow money) as "brother-in-law," explaining to the Duke of Chartres (afterwards Duke of Orleans) that Bedford was madly in love with the Princess Royal.

A series of frank little reports upon the princesses, as they appeared to an acute and intimate observer, has been found in the "Diary of Mrs. Harcourt,"[2] written soon after she became an inmate of the royal family in 1789.

"Princess Royal is the finest woman, Princess Augusta the prettiest, Princess Elizabeth the handsomest," she decides. They were then about twenty-three, twenty-one, and nineteen respectively. "Princess Royal"—Charlotte always addressed her daughter by that title—"has excessive sensibility, a great sense of injury, a great sense of her own situation, much timidity; without wanting resolution she wants presence of mind." Her desire was always to be the peace-maker amid family disagreements "and if she can procure pleasure to others it is the greatest delight she knows." Her extreme sensitiveness the Princess betrayed by constant blushing, and her "want of presence of mind" by a sort of awkwardness which irritated her mother, in whose presence the Princess was painfully nervous. Mrs. Harcourt, however, considered that "her sense of injury and her humility are alike mistaken."

Princess Augusta, according to the same observer, had a less marked character. Although she was the loveliest of the family, her father foiled all the suitors who would have asked her hand, and she remained with Queen Charlotte until the end.

Elizabeth, the third of the sisters, possessed great humour and quick feelings. Her "turn for conversation and peculiarity of ideas" were "entitled to be called

[1] Francis, 5th Duke, one of the party of Fox. He died unmarried, 1802.
[2] See Preface.

Wit, and she has the power of defending and supporting her own opinions in the presence of the Queen in a manner her sisters cannot attempt—a manner which the Princess Royal does not and Princess Augusta does not wish to attempt." It was on this sensible courageous daughter that Charlotte afterwards came to rely in the long years of anxiety after the King's mind had begun to give way.

While her daughters were growing up, however, their mother made little effort to cultivate their confidence. Miss Burney had noticed that when Prince William returned home, none of his sisters ventured to speak to him until the Queen left the room. Mrs. Harcourt relates how, in 1789, the Queen, speaking to her of the misfortunes of the unhappy Marie Antoinette, decorously premised that she had never approved of the errors of the Queen of France, but thought she had now more than paid in sufferings for them. Her catastrophe, thought Charlotte, was mainly the fault of her mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, who had brought her up so strictly and narrowly, and never had made companions of her daughters, but kept them at the greatest distance and in a severe restraint until Marie Antoinette, at a very early age, was married, and had to face, untrained, the licence of Paris. "I could not but think," comments the diarist, "that in this account the Queen, without perceiving it, in part condemned her own conduct towards her daughters, for, with the kindest intentions towards them, it certainly seems as if she kept them at too great distance, preventing that confidence that would be of such advantage to them, and obliging them to find more pleasure in the society of other friends than with their Mother." Nor were the other friends always well chosen, for the choice was limited.

Although the Queen did not allow her daughters to help her in any of her own charitable works, or even to

know of them, she was careful to inculcate in them the thoughtfulness for others which she believed she always showed herself. The result was that, if the princes were the most regardless persons in the kingdom of the woes and the feelings of others, the princesses were probably the most considerate. Princess Royal positively embarrassed the attendants by her anxiety to give no trouble, and Elizabeth sometimes even risked her mother's displeasure by a hint intended to obviate the inconvenience sometimes produced by Charlotte's royal orders about little matters.

A pretty story is told how, one morning at breakfast while the King was reading a newspaper, one of the little ones looked up into the Queen's face with: "Mama, I can't think what a *prison* is." An explanation was at once given, and the sad state of prisoners described, half starved because they could not buy food. The child rejoined, "that is cruel, for the prison is bad enough without starving: but I will give all my allowance to buy bread for the poor prisoners." The parents both praised the generous pledge and gave orders that it should be carried out, and a sum added from themselves, but that all should be given anonymously.

The Queen herself told an anecdote of Princess Sophia, then about eight years old, which illustrates her method.

A certain music-master, who suffered from a hideous disfigurement, had been selected to teach the younger princesses. "When Mr. Webb was to come to Sophia," said her Majesty, "I told her he had had some accident to disfigure his whole face by making him an enormous nose; but I desired her to remember this was a misfortune for which he ought to be pitied, and that she must be sure not to laugh at it nor stare at it. And she minded this very well and behaved always very properly. But, while Lady Cremorne was at the Lodge, she was with Sophia when Mr. Webb came to give her a lesson.

As soon as he was named she coloured very red and ran up to Lady Cremorne and said to her in a whisper: 'Lady Cremorne, Mr. Webb has got a very great nose, but that is only to be pitied, so mind you don't laugh.'"

Charlotte's own politeness was unfailing. When visiting, she curtsied separately to every person of whom she took leave; she always acknowledged the handing of a fan or a book by an attendant with a little bow or half-curtsey, and naturally she expected others to observe the rules of manners and etiquette which she had introduced for her family.

She did not in the least share her husband's dislike of formality; but, as his domestic habits confined her to a domestic routine, she was reduced to imposing on her family alone the excessive correctness of etiquette which was to her as a second religion, and the fact that she secured around herself an unbending formality, notwithstanding the undignified carelessness of the King, testifies to a skill and resolution worthy of a better cause. It was as if a rigid framework had been set up which remained unaffected by the King's erratic movements within it, though it sometimes bore hardly upon the regular attendants, who had to be always on duty. There were often hours when they were not summoned, but they could never count upon a fixed hour for rest or private business, and if the King's requirements happened not to fit with the regular hours of the palace, they were expected to omit their meals, or to remain on their feet for hours together, with perfect equanimity. Precision and regularity were the Queen's unyielding rule.

Etiquette required that if the King or Queen entered a room everybody present should slide backwards to the wall, and there stand, unless spoken to, when the lady distinguished must glide forward again with a curtsey. If the King or one of the princes came into the Queen's room, no manner of interruption was possible, even from her-

self. She would not even finish giving an order or handing a letter in their presence, and nothing might be announced, except dinner. It was, moreover, improper ever to get between a royal highness and the door, so that the unlucky person caught in the Queen's room could not even retire, but must stand motionless as a statue, and appear to be deaf and blind.

It was a significant rule in Charlotte's code of etiquette that rank was reckoned solely according to office in the royal household. Without it even a duke might not so much as hand one of the princesses to her carriage. Queen Caroline had always on such occasions accepted the service of the peer of highest rank who happened to be present.

No man but the King might ever sit in the Queen's presence, even if invited to do so, a rule which was probably responsible for the odd plan of sending her sons, if they visited her, to dine with the governesses and tutors at Mrs. Schwellenberg's table, for as royalty provided no second table, this was all that was available even for bishops. Ministers of state were not refreshed but had to betake themselves to some inn. It was not made very comfortable for the young princes to visit their mother.

Dinner was the grand occasion for etiquette. And when the earlier years of married life were over, the usual rule was for the King, Queen, and Princess Royal each to dine separately, and at different hours, and the other princesses together, or in schoolroom and nursery detachments, according to age. All, of course, were served by their own special attendants, and only the lady-in-waiting dined with the Queen. Arrangements were simplified when the royal family was at the seaside.

The King's abstemiousness has often been commented upon. Charlotte did not sympathize with his preference for plain dishes and vegetable food. She clung to Ger-

man cookery, and a considerable provision of sausage and other smoked dainties used regularly to be brought over from Hanover for her, the Hanoverian Minister being in charge of the selection, until at length an enterprising cook had a proper building made, and cured and smoked the meat himself.

CHAPTER IV

DOMESTIC LIFE, 1762-1788 (CONTINUED): EXCURSIONS AND ALARMS

THE dullness of Charlotte's domestic life was sometimes relieved by more or less elaborate parties, which she very possibly enjoyed the better because the company was restricted to the few she could personally know. Her most brilliant effort was, perhaps, the greeting she prepared for her husband on his birthday in 1763 (4th June). The Peace had been declared,[1] which Charlotte had at heart as much as George. She got him to stay at St. James's two days while, with a youthful delight in secrecy, she planned a wonderful entertainment for him in the garden of the Queen's House. It took the form of a quantity of the then fashionable transparencies,—pictures on oiled silk which, when lighted from behind, displayed scenes which could be made to move slowly. When His Majesty came back from St. James's, where he had been "receiving the masks" on their way to a grand masked ball, he was led to the window, and beheld a pretty illuminated scene of a temple of Peace on the bridge of which his own figure appeared bestowing the boon of peace on mankind.

Their Majesties did not often patronize masked balls, but they were rather fond of dancing in a simpler fashion, though, as has been said already, the extremely small scale of their entertainments gave offence. When King Christian III of Denmark came for a visit, although he

[1] The Peace of Paris, 1763, ended the Seven Years' War.

had left his wife, the King's sister, at home, the occasion was taken to hold a brilliant festival. The Queen opened the ball with him, and went through four country dances, besides the necessary minuets at the beginning. The King, still more energetic and more condescending, "danced all night, changing partners as the rest did every two dances and finished with Lady Mary Lowther [Bute's daughter] and the Hempdressers that lasted two hours. The whole very clever and agreeable and nothing else talked of."[1] Their Majesties' presence at Richmond encouraged the polite inhabitants to get up subscription balls, which were much patronized, at all events by the King's brothers, and at these the fashionable cotillon and country dances afforded ample opportunity for flirtation. A fashion of carrying about nosegays had come in, and notes could easily be conveyed.

Charlotte was not able for long to indulge her fondness for the play. The King was so grievously insulted in the Opera House on account of an unpopular tax, that to mark his displeasure he would not enter the theatre for many years. The rudeness of the mob of London was proverbial, and travellers sometimes report instances of roughness no less savage than is portrayed in "Evelina."

The pleasure, Charlotte said, which she most envied the King of Denmark was his tour to see the "beauties of England." George III, exactly like his grandfather, hated to embark upon novelty, and until the year 1788 never made any stay away from home, except for political purposes. In 1778, anxious to encourage whatever loyal and martial spirit might still survive the North ministry and its American failures, he made a kind of progress, which for the first time afforded to Charlotte a glimpse of the delights of her realm.

[1] Mrs. Delany.

They went in May to Portsmouth, and she particularly enjoyed a sail on the royal yacht to Spithead, passing through the fleet. In September, on their way to view the camp, they visited Winchester, which not only illuminated all its steeples, but rang all its bells, and evidently appreciated the honour the Queen did to the place by holding Drawing Rooms there. She appeared in a rather curious semi-military costume—described as a scarlet riding-dress, faced and embroidered with blue—and wore a cockade in her hat. It must have been the first essay towards the subsequently notable and hideous "Windsor uniform." From Winchester the King and Queen visited Salisbury, escorted by 500 mounted gentlemen of the district, and admired the sights of Wilton House and Stonehenge, honouring the *Queen's* Hotel at Ambresbury by staying a night there.

Short visits were paid in the autumn to Essex, where Lord Petre entertained his sovereigns royally, and to Kent, where, at Leeds Castle, the Queen held a Drawing Room remarkable for the first introduction to her of the lovely Duchess of Grafton (Horace Walpole's friend) and the famous rivals, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and Jane, Duchess of Gordon. Both aspired to take the lead in politics. The former, the friend of Fox, was renowned for her beauty and charm; but the latter, who possessed a powerful gift of language, in the end distanced her by becoming a Pittite and a Queen's woman.

Their Majesties certainly diminished their unpopularity by these little progresses. In the country the sullen spell which made them so disagreeable in London society seemed broken, and by a well-timed liberality to the ill-paid soldiers and sailors (the dockyard artificers at Portsmouth, *e.g.*, received £1,500), and in the country towns by extensive relief of poor debtors, they became almost popular in camp and navy, and earned the gratitude of many a home.

Such excursions as these were great events, however, and, ordinarily, the only amusement of the kind to be obtained was a visit to the house of some nobleman. It was a quite usual thing for people to ask to see the houses of their neighbours, and the constant resort of high-born foreigners—French especially, but Italians and Austrians and other Germans, as well—to this country as to a kind of pleasure-land, before the Great War broke out, encouraged this mode of entertaining them. Horace Walpole was always giving tickets of admission to Strawberry Hill. But a visit from royalty necessitated a great deal of ceremony; when Princess Emily sent to say that she was coming to call on the Duchess of Portland, the drawing-room had to be cleared of all its comfortable seats and of every book and piece of work, and the room to be rearranged with a set of stiff chairs and one armchair in the middle for the Princess.

The Queen, unfortunately, was not always considerate enough to announce herself beforehand: "I have been much distressed this morning," writes Horace Walpole (3rd August 1764). "The royal family reside chiefly at Richmond, whither scarce necessary servants attend them, and no mortal else but Lord Bute. The King and Queen have taken to going about to see places; they have been at Oatlands and Wanstead. A quarter before ten to-day, I heard the bell at the gate ring—truth is, I was not up, for my hours are not reformed, either at night or in the morning,—I inquired who it was? The Prince of Mecklenburgh and De Witz had called to know if they could see the house; [the servants] told them I was in bed but if they would call again in an hour they might see it. I shuddered at this report,—and would it were the worst part! The Queen herself was behind, in a coach: I am shocked to death, and know not what to do. It is ten times worse just now than ever at any other time: it will certainly be said that I refused

to let the Queen see my house. . . ."[1] In fact thirty-one years elapsed before Charlotte condescended to repeat the attempt.

In 1785 it was still a great event for royalty to pay a visit. When the King and Queen took three sons and three daughters to visit Lord and Lady Harcourt[2] at Nuneham, they set out from Windsor before seven in the morning. A three hours' drive brought them to a hospitable welcome arranged just to their taste; the young folks were feasted on good things, and Lord Harcourt presently suggested to His Majesty that it would be very easy to visit Oxford, should he wish to see it, if the royal party would honour Nuneham by staying the night there.

"Papa said,—'Why, Lord Harcourt, it's very tempting.' Mamma, my brother, sister, and myself (not by far the least delighted of the family) kept our wistful eyes upon the King, who fixed his on Mamma, and upon her saying—'I will do as you please'—he said—'Well, with all my heart let us stay.'"[3] The young princes were quite as much delighted with the treat of staying from home with such kindly hosts as by the wonders of Oxford next day: "Dear Augustus!" cried out the smallest, eleven-year-old Adolphus, to his senior, "how amazing good of Lord Harcourt, he has promised me that I shall sleep alone: I have seen my Room—it has a Yellow Damask Bed!" So delightful proved the visit that it was repeated next year, as Miss Burney records, with equal pleasure to the royal family, if not to their hustled servants.

When their majesties summoned resolution to pay a call upon one or another of their loyal nobles, the enthusiasm roused was so great that the royal family

[1] Letter 971 (vi).

[2] George, 2nd Earl Harcourt, and his wife Elizabeth (Vernon).

[3] Letter of Princess Augusta in Harcourt Papers, vol. vi.

were made almost as happy as their delighted hosts. It was easy enough for sprightly wits to laugh at the excitement; the fashionable and witty world had the advantage of expressing itself well, and putting its mockery on record, but it was, after all, a small world. A much larger body of opinion was represented by the Harcourts, Courtowns, Amhersts, Edgecumbes, Lincolns, and by the worthy country gentlemen, townsfolk, and peasantry whose loyal delight served—very naturally —only to increase the amusement with which the world of fashion always regarded their staid King and Queen.

Thus lively Lady Anne Lindsay reported funnily enough to Lady Harcourt her impressions of the royal visit to the Amhersts:[1] "A huge Waggon and eight fat horses, who seemed each to enjoy, like Lord George G[ermaine], a good place under Government for turning tail to what they did not choose to attack in front, had drawn along her Majesty's dressing case—carpets were hammering down in all corners of the house; pleasure danced in Lord Amherst's face, transcendant happiness in my Lady's; she looked and talked like a fair pea hen and assured me, upon her honour, that the King had (as yet) never been a bit uncivil, in spite of the intimacy in which they lived (remember I talk wide, but it amounted to that). I flattered her by saying things wou'd come round. . . . Behold assembled at the porter's lodge all those goodnatured folks drawn up by Lord Amherst to make their curtseys; but no sooner did their Majestys wheel in than Lord Amherst carried the royal heads to the wrong side of the chaise, by placing himself to the near wing instead of to the right: bad generalship in a *generalissimo*, by which means none of the mobility cou'd get a peep. Lord Amherst then proceeded on to the house at the head of a regiment of Seven-oakes

[1] In 1777 or 1778. Harcourt Papers, vol. viii.

school boys with gilded caps and a cracked drum; twenty Pyoniers marching before, to shew his Majesty the military ardor of his smallest subjects. . . . The company were then requested to proceed on to the walls of the house, where there was to be some music; accordingly they (looking very second best) did so, expecting some of the best performers in every stile; but oh! it was to hear an Ode composed by my Lord Amherst sung to the tune of 'God save the King' by the Chaunters of our country church! . . . I wish the Queen had not gone—if she had staid at home the Prince of Wales was to have been allowed to go, but her Majesty was selfish and so the poor little fellow was disappointed."

Charlotte did not care for some of the amusements which she was expected to patronize. Eton Montem, she said privately, was a bore, but a duty. Going to Ascot races—or to any race—was "a Vulgar Business," and she altogether disapproved of the craze which for some years was prevalent of seeing balloons go up, and even venturing in them. She could in some degree sympathize with the King in his fondness for concerts, being able, besides, to eke out her patience with affable conversation, just as when in chapel.

In 1784 there was a grand musical festival at Westminster Abbey which gave the King real enjoyment. His beloved Handel was performed for days together. All the musical and unmusical world assembled to hear the most celebrated performers of the day, and the Queen as patroness witnessed the performances, very finely attired in a close-fitting bodice with a stomacher of jewels and a sacque, and a train three yards long held up by a page. She had a cap with court lappets and a hood, and she prohibited feathers for this occasion.

At one time (1779 and after) fortnightly concerts at Kew alternated with Drawing Rooms, as the royal greet-

ing to the courtiers. The small pianoforte was just then making its appearance.

The gaiety of the fashionable society which George and Charlotte avoided was certainly no less vigorous for their absence, and, when the Prince of Wales, after reaching the age of eighteen, could no longer be kept in the durance of previous days, he eagerly sought to lead in "the high ton." His mother had introduced him publicly to Society at a ball (in February 1781), but this was the solitary festivity provided at home. The Prince solaced himself by going every night, as soon as the King went to bed, to places of amusement of no refined sort. When the royal family went back to Windsor it was usual for the Prince to withdraw as soon as the walk on the Terrace was over, and to go to sup at the fashionable Delmé's and romp with young ladies. He called on the notorious Mrs. Armitstead daily, and it was common knowledge that the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Melbourne, two great ladies at "the head of the ton," encouraged his amour, and were not loth to help the Duke of Cumberland to a complete revenge upon the King and Queen by abetting the young heir in a mighty friendship with his disgraced uncle and aunt. Hereupon the Queen forbade her ladies to visit the Duchess, and the King forbade the Prince's gentlemen to go to a dinner to which the Duke invited them, which did not prevent their house from becoming a new centre of fashion and vice. As for Lady Melbourne,[1] she sent her son to Eton, and twice a week went to see him and to give a fine dinner to which the Prince came. She was "the Queen of his fancy," in 1783, "and when she don't sit next to him at supper he is not commonly civil to his neighbours." She danced with him, too, "something in the cow stile, but he is in extase with admiration at it."[2]

[1] *Née* Elizabeth Milbanke, mother of the future Prime Minister.

[2] Lady Sarah Lennox.

It was a bitter grief to Charlotte that her son should not only display antagonism to his father, rush into the arms of Charles Fox and the Opposition, and lose huge sums of money at the fast gambling clubs—Brooks's and White's—but should be notorious in a loose age for the looseness of his life. But the King did nothing, except occasionally to complain bitterly to Gloucester or to some discreet servant. And the Queen, once more, had to abide by her self-imposed rule of silence.

But the even course of Queen Charlotte's life was more and more disturbed, as time went on, by occasional outbreaks of violence and by family trials which must have needed the more strength for endurance since she could never fling her burden upon the King. He must always be soothed, and it was Charlotte's first preoccupation to calm him; for even his intense affection for his little children betrayed something passionate and unbalanced. Once, the royal nursery at the Queen's House caught fire (in 1768) and the shock made her positively ill; it was probably this accident which made her take so much interest in Hartley's invention of fire-proof floors. She went to a house where he was demonstrating the safety of his floors by lighting a fierce fire upon the middle of one, and showed a remarkable confidence by going, with her children, into a room above that where the fire was blazing.

In 1782 Charlotte for the first time lost one of her children—the delicate baby Alfred. The King's grief was less extreme than had been feared. "I am very sorry for Alfred," he said to some one, "but if it had been Octavius I should have died too." A year later this adored child also was lost (May 1783), and Charlotte's struggle with her own grief, and with the King's, made her break down. But the last child, Amelia, was born that August, and the King, at all events, transferred to her the intense fondness he had lavished upon Octavius.

The violence of the political animosities of the London mob was not levelled at the Queen, whom nobody as yet accused of exerting political influence. But George was, generally, though not always, deeply unpopular, and of what the mob could do Charlotte had some terrible experiences.

Constables existed only in the City; Westminster had no police; there was no means of avoiding dangerous crowds, and people were crushed to death in the throng round the Opera House when the Queen was first to be seen there; nor was there any protection from footpads and roughs; drunken chairmen were perhaps more common than sober ones, and Miss Burney had an experience in St. James's Park which might have come out of the pages of "Evelina." Thus there was every encouragement for rioters, and the mob, growing larger than ever, waxed apparently more ferocious with every decade. When the Wilkes riots were at their height (1768), it was by a mere chance that the mob did not carry out its threat of attacking the Queen's House. And the King grumbled that he wished they would, that he might disperse them at the head of his guards.

In 1780 the anti-Roman Catholic riots stirred up by Lord George Gordon terrorized London for ten days. There were plenty of troops encamped in Hyde Park, the Green Park, and St. James's, but since the catastrophe of unhappy Captain Porteous no one had ever dared to give orders to troops during a riot. So the mob burned and plundered under the noses of the military, and although the Cabinet Council empowered Lord North to act, he characteristically went home to bed and "forgot" that he had the powers. The Houses of Parliament were beset, and some of the members nearly killed, the gaols were broken open and set on fire, and though people continued to go to the popular amusements at Ranelagh or Vauxhall, nobody felt sure that his home

might not be in a blaze on his return. The King's birthday was at hand, and with a strange acquiescence in the situation, two of the Queen's household went among the mob to learn from the leaders whether it would be safe to celebrate it. The rioters announced that they would permit the usual festivities to proceed freely, but that afterwards they should proceed to extremities. They observed their promise. The birthday was duly kept, the courtiers making their way to the Drawing Room through streets absolutely empty, and next morning the riots began again more fiercely than before. At length the disgraced Duke of Gloucester came to call upon the King to share his dangers. He tried to convey to him some conviction of what was happening, and begged the King to appoint some officer—as was done abroad—to take charge of the capital. "Oh, I will take care of that myself," airily replied his Majesty, and forthwith ignored public affairs while he wept over his brother, said he loved him best of all his family, and "carried him to see the Queen." Charlotte had little cordiality for the Duke, however, and when he came next time, to see the royal children in her apartment, she immediately retired. In the meantime the King bethought himself of asking his counsellors if he had lawful power to call out the military, and, being fortified by their approval, at last endorsed all the orders with his own hand, and the ten days' anarchy was over. "The King's promptitude," only just in time, had saved London from destruction.

CHAPTER V

UNPOPULARITY OF THE KING—MISS BURNEY IN THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD. THE KING'S INSANITY (1788).

THE political difficulties of the early eighties, following hard on the disgraces of the American War, revealed so clearly the intrigues and ineptitudes of the King and his political favourites as to give great impetus to satire of every species, and the fact that the King was himself the most active champion of party warfare made satire peculiarly personal. The notoriously dissolute conduct of the Prince of Wales, his rudeness to his father and his exuberant friendship with the most reckless party leaders of the Opposition, marked him out, too, as legitimate prey. Neither King nor Prince, neither Court nor Ministers, and indeed but seldom the Opposition, furnished from 1770 to 1784 any example upon which a patriotic or impartial eye could look but with indignation.

The caricatures which were now beginning to supplant political ballads in popular estimation as vehicles of news and criticism, and over which no kind of censorship could be exercised, failed not to exhibit in shop windows or on stalls the entire royal family in coarse or ludicrous guise. Rowlandson and Gillray, gibbeting impartially politicians and fashionables of every hue, had no more respect for the King or the princes than for North, Fox, or Burke. And the repulsive aspect in which these powerful artists and many inferior draughtsmen depicted the royal family received a sort of corroboration from the favourite satirist of the day, "Peter Pindar"

(Wolcot), whose cheap rhymes and coarse buffoonery, though their credit has long since evaporated, were enormously popular and influential at the time.

Writers and artists alike portray George III absurd almost to idiocy. The particular vices of his three elder sons were perhaps hardly susceptible of exaggeration; they became, at all events, topics of common knowledge. Charlotte herself is a far less frequent subject of mirth. When she appears it is always in the *rôle* of a miser, while her favourite, the Schwellenberg, is not forgotten, but popularized as a grasping and insolent "toady" of the King and Queen—a portrait which, though distorted, had some elements of truth.

Probably this increasing scurrility, and the degree to which political passion inflamed every section of fashionable society, were among the reasons which rendered Charlotte now as zealous as George himself for privacy. The tepid popularity which the King had begun to acquire since the conclusion of peace in 1783, and the advent of Pitt as Prime Minister, was of slow growth and never obtained in the world of fashion. Charlotte resented intensely the freedoms of the newspapers; she felt it an indignity if even an appointment or a resignation among her ladies was commented upon. The King actually read not only the newspapers, but "Peter Pindar" himself, and he certainly was not always silent to his wife. Mrs. Schwellenberg considered it insolent in the papers even to mention persons who lived "in the King's house." What Charlotte's feelings must have been if she cast her eye on the paltry obscenities of Wolcot's "Lousiad," or on Gillray's grimmer indictments of her sons, may be easily imagined. Mrs. Schwellenberg, who spent most of the year in town, and had a complete household of her own (six servants always attended her), was neither reticent nor judicious, and in the course of her shopping for the

Queen, whose ribands, laces, etc., she always purchased, she must have seen and heard a great deal which she did not always understand.

Perhaps this may explain how it was that, just when Charlotte was becoming freed from the claims of the nursery, and when it might have been expected that she would permit to herself and her grown-up daughters a life of more scope and interest, the Queen's household was more secluded than ever. It became a kind of convent, whose inmates might pay no visits and receive no friends but after asking special permission, accorded or withheld by the Queen herself, as though she were a careful dame watching over a boarding-school. "Nobody comes in but takes some news out," she once said to Fanny Burney, in explanation. And she apparently imagined that she could reduce the unkindness of gossip by cooping up her daughters and her ladies in a close confinement, although the movements of the King's suite and of a host of servants could not be interfered with.

Her views in this respect reinforced the arguments of economy in favour of staffing her household with persons of the middle class, English or foreign. They could be better controlled than scions of the nobility and landed gentry, and gossip would in their case be less likely to filter through to the inimical and dreaded world of London. Probably the King's suspiciousness had penetrated Charlotte's mind also. Certainly, during her middle life, something of the gloomy anxiety which was undermining his health seems to have cast a shadow upon her. The early gaiety of temper disappeared, seldom to reappear until her old age.

Considering the system of privacy and secrecy which Charlotte had pursued for some years before her husband's terrible illness of 1788-9 gave her a stronger reason for insisting upon it, there lies a comical irony in her admission—her almost forcible annexation—to her

household of an unrivalled chronicler of small-beer, that fine artist in gossip, Fanny Burney. It actually never occurred to the Queen that an authoress famous for her portrayal of social life and character might be likely to make notes or write letters about the lofty society of which she was to be made a component part.

Her Majesty practically forbade Miss Burney to see any friends but her relatives, and was quite nervous if she ventured to ask leave to quit the palace for an hour or two. Fortunately she did not suspect Miss Burney's pen. No doubt the Queen, like other old-fashioned people of high rank (the dowager Duchess of Portland, for example), though ready to make kind remarks about an authoress's book, just as she might upon a young lady's playing, regarded the profession of authorship but as a form of business: the book might be admired, the author could only be classed with chaplains, musicians, schoolmasters, or actors as a superior class of servant. Charlotte, who recorded her gratified surprise on finding the Head Master of Eton "quite a gentleman in his manner," would hardly imagine that a young person released from the odious necessity of earning money by her pen, and raised to the position of the Queen's Assistant Keeper of the Wardrobe, could be likely to have recourse to her tool again. The attitude of the Queen and the duchesses is precisely expressed in the spiteful comments made on Miss Burney by Mrs. Delany's maid, who felt exactly the same.

Charlotte, after all, little understood that respectable middle class from which she recruited her household. They were a very moral, serious class of person, and they evinced a boundless reverence for royalty and a perfect submission to orders, and that was all which concerned royalty. So Fanny Burney was taken into the royal household, to be the Hervey of its economies and discomforts, of the King's insanity and the Queen's

misery. Nor could a more loyal and gentle diarist have been found. But the diarist is, besides, so racy and detailed that her pictures are not likely to fade on their canvas. Charlotte vainly dreamed that by offending the generality and hurting those few who were her trusted servants, she might conceal the sad truth of the King's condition. She unintentionally caused the transmission to posterity of much which provokes severer condemnation than Miss Burney ever expressed.

Frances Burney entered the Queen's household in 1786. Her father, the musician, Dr. Charles Burney, had produced a book which had interested the musical King. His Majesty sent for Dr. Burney, liked the man as much as his music, and considered him to be an excellent person to fill the post of director of the Queen's band, which was likely soon to fall vacant. He told Dr. Burney so, and the hint was considered by the King himself, and by Burney's friends, as equivalent to a promise. When, however, the vacancy occurred, the Earl of Salisbury, as Chamberlain, considered that, according to sacred Whig custom and the true British Constitution, the appointment lay entirely in his own hands. He declined to listen to the royal wishes, and appointed some one else. The King, who was exceedingly scrupulous about his personal obligations, was a good deal concerned, and the Queen, always watchful to soothe his agitation, asked one of the clerical attendants, the worthy sub-tutor Smelt, whether anything else could be done for Dr. Burney. Mr. Smelt suggested that perhaps something might be done for his daughter, which would come to the same thing. Charlotte was at that moment on the point of losing a confidential German attendant, Mrs. Hagedorn, Mrs. Schwellenberg's lieutenant, and she instantly thought of conferring her place upon Miss Burney.

Practically the situation was that of a Dresser, or sort

of lady's maid intermediary between the Keeper of the Robes, Mrs. Schwellenberg, and the Queen's domestic servants, of whom Mrs. Thielke was the chief. But the position was that of a lady: a footman and a maid were to be provided to attend upon her, she would have her own parlour and bedroom, and her salary of £200 was the same as that formerly paid to Queen Caroline's Maids of Honour. In court rank she would come next to Mrs. Schwellenberg as the Queen's confidential attendant. It was not a position of formal dignity, entitling her to appear with her Majesty in public, but in their private hours she would actually be living with the royal family, whose time, as everyone knew, was principally spent in private. As the appointment was for life, it constituted a complete provision for Miss Burney, and as she was famous as the authoress of "Evelina," that wonderful new departure in polite letters, the nomination showed not only kindness to Dr. Burney—himself a well-known, highly respected, and much liked man—but a suitable recognition of the merit of good literature. Miss Burney would be a very suitable person to converse with the young princesses, none of whose tutors and attendants had as yet been distinguished for culture or even knowledge of good English, and the Queen herself, who was not without an interest in books when sufficiently proper, might benefit by hearing Miss Burney read aloud.

Her Majesty had made due inquiries before formally conferring the place on the eminent young authoress, and gracefully said that she was "led to think of Miss Burney, first by her books, then by seeing her, then by always hearing how she was loved by her friends, but chiefly by" Mrs. Delany's friendship for her.

Charlotte's intentions were, of course, of the kindest; she, who never considered that her own daughters could need any change from the schoolroom or their mother's parlour, any acquaintance but a pair of quiet ladies-in-

waiting and the corps of commonplace governesses and foreign readers, would naturally be incapable of imagining that a respectable young woman of the English middle class could feel anything but joy and pride in relinquishing her personal friends and country visits for a position in the royal household. Authorship, as an amusement, could surely be pursued at court as well as at home—and indeed the King frequently asked Miss Burney what she was writing. But the idea that a young woman could feel independence something which it was a sacrifice to surrender, would have been incomprehensible not only to the Queen but to many other well-bred people. It was a notion which clearly never occurred to either Mrs. Delany or Dr. Burney himself, and one to which Fanny never ventured to advert but with a few very intimate female friends. Her genius and success had in fact made her at heart a very unusual young woman, but she was shrewd enough to realize how "dangerous" it would be to be thought a literary lioness, and how far her brilliant friends—Burke, Wyndham, Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, and the rest—were from expressing the sentiments of ordinary society. She was careful never to shock those sentiments, and that both the Queen and good old Mrs. Delany always took her for the orthodox type of sweet submission and gentle sympathy is a testimony to the clever woman's powers of behaviour. Dr. Burney, of course, gleefully accepted what he felt to be the splendid offer made to his daughter; so there could be nothing further to consider. Good daughters, even of indulgent parents, always echoed their father's will.

Fanny Burney had just entered upon her new duties when the royal family received a terrible shock. The King's life was suddenly attempted by a madwoman. He had gone to St. James's to hold a levée, leaving the Queen and the rest of his family at Windsor, when,

as he was getting out of the carriage at the garden door of the palace, the crowd thronging closely round as usual, a woman came up to him with a petition. As he kindly took it from her she lunged at him with a carving-knife. The King started back in amazement, but she had time to make a second thrust, and actually to touch his waistcoat before the attendants seized her. The King called out to them, "The poor creature is mad, do not hurt her, she has not hurt me," showed himself cheerfully to the excited crowd, and went in to hold the levée as usual, giving orders that no one should go to tell the Queen until he could break the news to her himself. The Spanish Ambassador had the delicacy to take care that the spirit of the King's command should be obeyed by instantly setting off for Windsor, in order to be able to set her Majesty's mind at ease, should any unauthorized report reach her.

George returned to Windsor in the evening, and walked into the midst of the quiet family circle with: "Here I am—safe and well—as you see—but I have very narrowly escaped being stabbed!" This blunt announcement stupefied the Queen and the two eldest princesses into a painful dumbness; but the two ladies-in-waiting, the Duchess of Ancaster and her daughter, burst into tears, and this broke the tension for the princesses, who began to weep violently. The Queen looked at them: "I envy you—I can't cry" she said. The King then told them what had happened: "Has she cut my waistcoat?" he asked. "Look! for I have not had time to examine. . . . Nothing could have been sooner done," he added, "for there was nothing for her to go through but a thin linen, and fat."

It was Mrs. Schwellenberg's conviction "that some latent conspiracy belonged to the attempt, and that it would never rest here," and this idea naturally spread through the family. But George III's nerve was never

affected by physical danger. He was certain that the attempt was merely the maniacal act of one woman, and paid no heed to "the excess of terror and doubt of further mischief with which all his family and household were seized." He remained perfectly composed, and insisted upon taking the usual stroll upon the Terrace, only attended by a single equerry.

"The poor Queen went with him, pale and silent, the princesses followed, scarce yet commanding their tears. In the evening, just as usual, the King had his concert; but it was an evening of grief and horror to his family; nothing was listened to, scarce a word was spoken; the princesses wept continually; the Queen, still more deeply struck, could only, from time to time, hold out her hand to the King and say, 'I have you yet!' Nor was there, adds Miss Burney, a dry eye in either of the Lodges on hearing of the catastrophe."

The ensuing Drawing Rooms were made opportunities for the demonstration of loyalty, and Charlotte attached much importance to the homage so rendered or omitted. Mrs. Harcourt wrote earnestly to her sister-in-law, Lady Harcourt, who had hesitated to undertake the journey entailed: "You must come on Thursday. Every soul comes, the Queen expects it. The Duchess of Ancaster says it is almost *necessary* and certainly right. Miss Goldsworthy says, it would be an omission you would be sorry for if you did not come as others will come and the Queen takes attention on this occasion particularly kind."[1]

One may, perhaps, see a hint of a permanent low state of health in the timid nerves and ever ready floods of tears so constantly ascribed to the princesses, which may well have been the result of their sedentary, indoor life. "Sensibility," however, was becoming the fashion.

[1] Harcourt Papers, vol. xi.

The restraint which Charlotte herself always practised she had not passed on to her daughters. Miss Burney, on her own showing, was exceedingly sensitive too. She was possessed by a modesty whose manifestations were often tiresome. She could read Shakespeare to old Mrs. Delany, but if, in the course of her duties, the Queen ever desired her to read aloud, she lost her voice, choked, reddened, and was awkward. She could talk briskly with Burke or Wyndham (she usually found men more easy to get on with than women); but when there was any hope of conversation from her in ordinary society, she was dumb. Charlotte had hoped to find in her new Dresser a "conversible" person, for, as she sadly confided to Mrs. Delany, there was nothing she loved so much as conversation, and nothing she found so hard to get. She said that she had not only to start the subjects, but commonly to support them. "The Queen," said Mrs. Delany to the new attendant, "is always best pleased to have the answers that are made her lead on to further discourse. . . . I do really entreat you not to draw back from her nor to stop conversation with only answering Yes or No." But the admonition was, for a long while, vain.

This was distinctly hard upon Charlotte, who still, in her matronly age, had a good deal of curiosity and plenty of general interests. "Oh! for me," she once cried, "I am always quarrelling with time! It is so short to do something and so long to do nothing. . . . But nothing makes me so angry as to hear people not know what to do! For me, I never have half time enough for things. But what makes me most angry still, is to see people go up to a window—'What a bad day, dear, what shall we do such a day as this?' 'What?' I say, 'why, employ yourselves; and then what signifies the bad day?'"

In course of time, however, the Queen's gentle con-

sideration for the nervousness of her new *protégée* overcame Miss Burney's diffidence sufficiently to enable her to become quite conversible, at any rate upon the subject of books, about which Charlotte would sometimes ask questions, particularly when Mrs. Thrale and Boswell published their recollections of Johnson, and Miss Burney could supply names and anecdotes. Charlotte loved personal gossip, and none seems to have been too slight for her attention. She usually read serious books, especially sermons, in which she had a very safe taste. She admired those of Ogden and of Dr. Porteus, the Bishop of Chester, and wished the latter would publish another volume. "No, no," cried the King, "you must not expect a man, while he continues preaching, to go on publishing. Every sermon printed diminishes his stock." He added that he himself liked no sermons "but what were plain and unadorned." "Nor I neither," said the Queen. "But for me, it is, I suppose, because the others I don't understand."

Charlotte discriminated very justly between the style and the substance of a book. "Very fine language—very bad book," she explained of some German work. "They translate all our worst! And they are so improved in language; they write so finely now, even for the most silly books, that it makes one read on, and one cannot help it. Oh, I am very angry sometimes at that! Do you like the 'Sorrows of Werter'?" "I—I have not read it, ma'am—only in part." "No? Well," continued her Majesty, "I don't know how it is translated but it is very finely writ in German, and I can't bear it." Miss Burney replied that she was glad to hear this, as she had herself resolved not to read it, since it seemed to be a defence of suicide. "Yes," said the Queen, "and what is worse, it is done by a bad man for revenge."

Conversation turning upon Milton led Charlotte to make some comments upon "the Roman Catholic

superstitions" as she had observed them. "Oh, so odd! Can it signify to God Almighty if I eat a piece of fish or a piece of meat? And one of the Queen of France's sisters wears the heel of her shoe before, for a penance, as if God Almighty would care for that!"

Charlotte made an excellent use of Miss Burney on one occasion. When the impressive trial of Warren Hastings began (February 1788) she took a treble interest in the proceedings, first, because the impeachment was the work of that Opposition which, as led by Fox and Burke, implacable towards Pitt as towards North, too often seemed to be a personal opposition to the King; secondly, because she was as clear as the King or Fanny Burney herself, about the justice of Hastings' cause, and was, besides, very much pleased with his wife, whom she distinguished by friendly conversation at the Drawing Rooms; and, finally, because she loved to know the details of a sensation. She went herself to the opening, but the comments in the papers—ascribing her presence to a wish to exert influence, and to bribery on the part of Hastings, perhaps made her realize the impropriety or at least imprudence of this step, besides that, having gone privately and not to the royal box (Westminster Hall was arranged much as for a theatrical representation), she had the disconcerting sight of the unacknowledged Duchess of Gloucester and her son sitting in it, and of Mrs. Fitzherbert publicly conducted by the Prince of Wales to his own. She thenceforth contented herself with sending Miss Burney, and it became a custom for Fanny to relate afterwards to the Queen and princesses—and sometimes to the King—her report of the proceedings. She was an excellent mimic and an enthusiastic sympathizer, and her reports were clearly very entertaining. Unluckily neither she nor any one else has set them down for us.

These events of the spring of 1788 were, however, soon

cast into oblivion by the mental breakdown of the King which, combined with the disgraceful conduct of the Prince of Wales, and the political battle which raged over the Regency question, breaks the reign of George III, and the life of Charlotte, into two distinct sections.

Charlotte, in later life, said that from the day of her marriage until the King's illness she had not known what real sorrow was. She learned it during the terrible six months of his illness, and from that time scarce a year passed without bringing some new grief or anxiety on account of her sons or her husband.

George III's health had been seriously impaired in the early summer. A lengthy session of parliament kept him longer than usual in town, and when at last, in July, the royal family left the Queen's House it was to undertake the extraordinary novelty of a visit of some weeks to the tiny watering-place of Cheltenham.

The expedition was made by George's own wish. He had heard from one of his Lords of the Bedchamber, Lord Falconberg, of the excellent effect of the Cheltenham waters upon scrofulous disorders, and as he always ascribed his own ailments to the inherited tendency in that direction, he resolved to try them on himself. Sir George Baker, always principally concerned to avoid responsibility and to please his Majesty, readily prescribed a course of the waters. Lord Falconberg lent his house, for the little town had no fit accommodation, and in the middle of July their Majesties, with the three eldest princesses, set forth in very simple style for their first holiday in the English country.

It was a very pleasant experience. They drove by roads along which, all the way from Oxford to Cheltenham, stretched, heedless of the rainy day, an almost unbroken crowd, whom respect prevented from thronging too close to the carriages or raising tiresome exclamations. "Every town seemed all face," and every four or

five miles some more or less execrable band struck up "God save the King."

Cheltenham, then "almost all one street, extremely long, clean, and well paved," struck the royal party as charmingly placed amid its green surroundings, with nothing to interrupt the splendid view all the way to the Malvern heights, and the simplicity of the rather cramped accommodation amused Charlotte, who had a remarkable power of adapting herself to circumstances, and was never put out by trifling inconveniences. "*This*, ma'am!" cried Miss Burney on entering the Queen's room, "Is *this* little room for your Majesty?" "'Oh, stay,' cried she, laughing, 'till you see your own before you call it little!'"

The whole party were soon in the highest spirits. George himself wrote almost facetiously to Lord Harcourt, who was coming to pay his respects, while to the suite the six weeks' sojourn gave a most enjoyable holiday, for the preference of the King and princesses for the abeyance of etiquette had to be accepted, and the royal family visited the Rooms and promenaded on the walks like private persons, and though their walks and their house were often beset with a great multitude, "all one head," yet it was so respectful and quiet ("how unlike a London mob") as to create no inconvenience.

At six in the morning the King used to betake himself to drink the waters and then, usually accompanied by the Princess Royal and Lady Harcourt, strolled about for an hour or two on the public walks. They returned to join the Queen at breakfast, and about ten the whole party would often drive off on some expedition to see a fine view or a great country mansion. At four, as usual, they dined, and then came a second stroll on the walks, at seven, tea, a conversational evening, supper at ten, and bed at eleven.

It was almost with the ardour of explorers that King,

Queen, and princesses discovered china-works and cloth-works, and the two cathedrals of Gloucester and Worcester. The towns they drove through made a gala of the royal visit, and taught the sovereigns that a natural loyalty existed among their subjects of a quality unknown in the capital. Particularly touching was the attention of the people of Stroud, where a wonderful demonstration of cloth-working had been prepared, showing in a sort of exhibition the entire process of the business, from shearing the sheep to making up bales of cloth for sale. The King came, as usual, on horseback, his family in carriages, but the thousands who thronged round "would neither shout nor suffer the bands of music to play until they were assured that the animal was so quiet that their beloved sovereign would not be endangered by the demonstrations of their loyalty and joy, once satisfied upon this point they rent the air with their acclamations."[1]

The King, however, assumed that one could not have too much of a good thing, and insisted upon drinking double the proper quantity of the strong sulphurous waters, save upon Sundays, when he took none. It was, of course, impossible to caution him, for none of the royal physicians was in attendance, "the Cheltenham Apothecary" being sent for when some of the party were attacked by influenza. Moreover, one of the King's most absolute prerogatives was to prescribe for his family and himself, so, though a strong representation was made to some of the household by a gentleman who knew the danger of over-doses of the waters, no warning reached the King—not that it is very likely that he would have paid any heed to it.[2]

[1] Lady Harcourt.

[2] Several contemporary writers speculate on the overdoses of the waters being a predisposing cause of the King's illness, and it is curious that an Irish doctor declared he had known six similar cases,

No ill effects appeared at first. It was not until a month after the return to Windsor that those in close attendance upon his Majesty were gradually alarmed by something unusual in his manner. He became, as it were, an exaggeration of himself, sometimes nervous and irritable, sometimes vehemently affectionate. His actions among his equerries were unaccountable; he dwelt on personal details or scraps of gossip with perverse emphasis, would suddenly order changes of arrangements, or displace the servants, and his wife, who suffered most from his extraordinary state and perhaps had a clearer suspicion (derived from her knowledge of his illness in 1765) of what might be dreaded, became a prey to incessant fear which, together with the King's grave condition, she strove to hide from every one.

On 5th October Miss Burney found herself "the object to whom he spoke," and was exceedingly concerned by the rapidity and vehemence of his talk, and his hoarse, wild voice; she thought he had all the marks of a high fever. Next day, Sunday, he suddenly started up in the royal pew (an enclosed box), embraced his wife and daughters and then burst into tears. He was aware that his nerves were beyond his control, and asked Princess Elizabeth—"You know what it is to be nervous, but was you ever so bad as this?" To which she had the presence of mind to reply "Yes."

All this while the royal physician, Sir George Baker, was regularly attending the King, and in answer to Charlotte's anxious questions pompously replied that "the King was certainly very ill, but that there was nothing that alarmed him; he saw his way and should set everything right if they would give him time." His mode of treatment was to give the King very strong

four from the effects of Cheltenham waters, two from some waters in Ireland. Mrs. Harcourt, however, believed worry to be the sole cause of the King's mental breakdown.

physic, and then laudanum to counteract the pain produced by the physic; three doses of each were administered within twenty-four hours. The King unfortunately swallowed the drugs obediently, but would not pay any further attention to directions nor even consent to change his stockings after a wet walk, though the water ran out of his shoes. He naturally caught a violent cold —got rheumatism in his feet, it seems, and then at last refused to take any more of Baker's drugs, and gave him a scolding for administering senna, which he declared always had disagreed with him. Sir George now considered the King delirious, and hurried away, first to report to the Prime Minister, Pitt, how ill he found his Majesty, and then to the Stock Exchange to sell out the whole of his funds there—in order to make a particular investment, he afterwards pleaded. Premier and doctor both went to Kew next day, but were surprised to find the King very much better. For three hours, said Pitt, he transacted business "as well as at any period of his life," and Baker was so much amazed that he confided his dreadful fears of the night before to Lady Courtown, who was then attending the Queen. "Good God! Sir George," she cried indignantly, "if you thought the King so ill, how could you leave him?" Unluckily Baker also felt it proper to own to the King how his own selling out from the stocks when his Majesty was known to be ill had produced a panic and a fall of 10 per cent. and George held it to be his duty to go to hold a levée, which he had just agreed to put off, that he might be seen in public. Very naturally he was a good deal the worse, and people were only the more alarmed by observing how ill he looked.

During these weeks of anxiety, Charlotte was completely at a loss, and broken down mentally and physically. The whole of her system of life had been based upon an absolute deference to the King. None but her

daughters and her waiting-women had ever looked to her for direction, and she did not now suppose herself to have either the duty or the right to assume it. The failure of the King's mind deprived her of her foundation stone, and she seemed to be incapable of framing any plan to meet the emergency. Possibly it might have been useless had she attempted to control or persuade her half-insane husband: at all events she did not make the attempt. She could imagine no duty or prospect but resignation. Her two eldest sons perceived the situation, and the Prince of Wales hastily grasped at the reins.

In any natural condition of things the right and duty of the eldest son to intervene in the distracted household could hardly have been disputed. The difficulty was that the Prince of Wales was unlikely to act as any ordinary son would. It was not possible to say openly that the eldest son of the King and Queen could not be trusted to see his father properly tended and his mother comfortably established; that he rejoiced over his father's insanity, exulted in the prospect of relegating King and Queen to a private life, and was in haste to let them and their household realize his advent to power by inflicting indignities upon them. That this was true the household apprehended but too clearly. Charlotte and her eldest daughter knew it, dreaded the Prince's presence, and hinted that he had better return to his amusements at Brighton. Yet it did not occur to Charlotte that she could exercise any authority herself, and she miserably submitted to her son's sudden assumption of authority.

A dread of personal violence on the part of the distracted King, and a kind of horror, more powerful than mere terror, dominated the Queen's mind, apparently to the exclusion of any thought for husband or children. "Overpowered with some secret terror," as Miss Burney clearly saw, she sometimes broke down into bitter tears,

at other times paced incessantly up and down the room, shaking her head in distress and irresolution. At length she achieved the step of sending for a second physician, Dr. Johnson's friend, Heberden—not to prescribe for the patient—that would be taking too much upon herself—but to give his counsel without any authority. She was principally bent upon concealing the King's condition, and when she read an account of it published in the "Morning Herald" she was terribly indignant, declared the printer should be called to account, bade Miss Burney burn the paper, "and ruminated upon who could be employed to represent to the editor that he must answer at his peril any further such treasonable paragraphs."

At length arrived the crisis so long foreseen but still totally unprovided for. It was on the 5th of November that, while the King was driving with the Princess Royal, his restlessness and the contradictory orders he gave seriously alarmed her and the attendants. His passionately affectionate demonstrations to his daughters distressed them, as unbalanced, and at dinner time the presence of his two eldest sons drew him into similar protestations mingled with reproaches. He assured the Duke of York that he loved him so much that he could refuse him nothing, except what might injure the rights of the Prince of Wales: *he* had used him ill—but he forgave him—he was his son and he always had loved him and always should love him. The Prince was so nearly in convulsions from emotion that his sister Elizabeth had to rub his temples with Hungary water, but to this, and the whole party being drowned in tears, the King was insensible. Charlotte sat through the scene

[1] In later years the Prince said that his father took him by the collar and thrust him against the wall, half choking him; but nobody else mentions such an incident, and the Prince's memory was notoriously dramatic.

outwardly unmoved, but so soon as she could leave the table and reach her room she fell into a fit of hysterics, probably for the first time in her life. The sole attendant upon their royal highnesses was the sensible Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave, who, when the King followed, still talking, boldly informed him that the Queen was ill. "Then," said he, "I will take care of her myself," and he took her to the drawing-room, "made a sort of bed on one of the sofas," and placed her upon it, ordered the princesses to sit down on particular seats, put out nearly all the lights, and kept hanging over his wife, showing the fondest solicitude, but in a deranged manner which paralyzed her with fear. It must be remembered that mental aberration in those days was regarded solely with terror and horror, was usually treated by coercion, and that all persons of education and sensibility fled from any manifestation of it.

At last the King was persuaded that as the Queen was ill he had better sleep in an adjoining room, but it was not until midnight that he would allow her to withdraw to bed. Baker might prescribe if he liked, declared the King, "but the Queen shall not be hurt as I have been by taking his medicines." It was out of his power to take rest himself. Suddenly he returned to Charlotte's room, where she was in bed with Miss Goldsworthy sitting by her, and taking the light from the chimney-piece he held it towards her face, saying, "Yes, I am not deceived, I thought she was here, I thought she would not leave me. . . . Goully," he went on, "you are honest, I can depend upon you, you will take care of her; they said the King was ill, he was not ill, but now the Queen is ill he is ill too." At length Charlotte's entreaties that he would go to bed induced him to leave the room, but she lay for the rest of the night in an agony of fear lest he should return. Next morning she sent for Baker, but that worthy sent word that he had

himself taken a dose and was in a perspiration, and could not safely leave his bed.

This gave the Prince of Wales the opportunity for his first decisive step. He sent for his own physician, Dr. Warren, the most fashionable doctor of the day, hand-in-glove with Fox, the Duchess of Devonshire, and the other leaders of the Opposition and of fashionable society. Warren placed his hopes of advancement upon the Prince, and he readily grasped the wishes and intentions of the Opposition. The King was insane; insanity was not curable; it must be the same as if the King were dead; the Prince would be Regent, there could now be no other authority within the royal family than the Prince's, and very shortly no other authority in the State either. Then Pitt would be dismissed and Charles Fox and his friends, from the Duke of Portland to Sheridan, would spring triumphantly into office and redistribute all the patronage. The Queen would of course be set aside together with the insane King, and possibly might not be held entitled to the dower of a widow, in which case she was at the mercy of the Prince, who could send her with the princesses to live where and as he chose. In any case there would be a clean sweep of all the members of the royal Household, and the new ones would be appointed by the Prince alone.

Warren worked well for the Prince. In the first place, the King had a dislike for him and upon his appearance became very much excited. In the second, the doctor's fiat was that in order to give His Majesty the quiet he needed he must not see his wife or daughters, for whom he was continually asking. To make sure that he should not even hear any familiar sounds the Queen was hurriedly exiled to a couple of inconvenient rooms at the further end of the house. She was ready to submit to any discomfort, and, indeed, longed for definite direction, but she waited in vain for Dr. Warren to

come to tell her the result of his examination; from the window her astonished servants saw him going away: "Run! stop him!" cried Charlotte. "Let him but tell me what I am to do." Miss Burney wept to hear the words, so painfully significant. To the indignation of the Queen's attendants they next learned that Warren had gone to the Castle to make his report to the Prince. The Queen was to be ignored.

This indignity and the removal from her own apartments to an attendant's room seemed to break Charlotte's spirit utterly. She "gave way to a perfect agony of grief and affliction, while the words, 'What will become of me! What will become of me!' uttered with the most piercing lamentations struck deep into all our hearts."[1]

Up to this point the Queen had shut herself up with Miss Goldsworthy or one or two others of her attendants, and the poor princesses had with difficulty learned anything certain. Now they tried to put aside their own grief to endeavour to soothe hers, but the conduct of her two sons—the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, who had not very long returned from Germany—gave her the most cruel distress. They manifested a shocking exultation even in the clubs and streets of London. They came into the Lodge, as if it was no longer their mother's house, at all hours, wearing the unfortunate servants to death by the incessant strain, for the etiquette was not permitted to be in the least relaxed—and this not from any anxiety or affection, but in order to press plans upon their mother and hurry her to some decision, showing great offence when she did not agree with them. "If we were together I could tell you some particulars of the P. of Wales's behaviour towards the King and her [the Queen] within these last

[1] Miss Burney.

few days that would make your blood run cold but dare not commit them to paper," wrote W. W. Grenville to his brother, the Marquis of Buckingham.[1]

The Prince was not personally insolent to his mother, but to his deranged father he showed no kind of respect. The equerries were soon sent away to their homes, or, if they stayed, forbidden to see the King. He was left to the care of pages and common servants, some of whom treated him with an impertinence and familiarity which actually drove him to fury.

On the pretext of keeping the house quiet or of preventing the spread of gossip, the Queen's principal readers and ladies were forbidden to visit the Lodge, and entrance was granted to hardly any one who could be of service. At that very time the princes were spreading stories of their unhappy father's delirium and manifesting the most indecent joy, and the Queen could hear their noisy luncheon parties just below the room where she sat in misery, until she summoned up energy to require her sons to remove to the Castle for their meals.

Thus passed the month of November (1788). The Queen, who had adopted the idea of complete seclusion as fitting and wise, was usually shut up in her dressing-room, and would neither go out of doors nor suffer any one else to do so, till the death-like stillness of the Lodge persuaded the inhabitants of Windsor that the King was actually dead.

"The Queen's extreme caution prevents her interfering either with respect to public affairs or what immediately concerns the case of the King. She wishes everything to be said that anybody can suggest, but that it should be to the Chancellor, not to herself." The Chancellor, the special adviser of the Crown under the Georges, was at this time Lord Thurlow. "If she suffers

[1] 21st December 1788.

herself to be parted from him [the King] now he is lost for ever, but at such an important moment I hope she will act with spirit." Thus Mrs. Harcourt,[1] watching the campaign of the princes to depose their father.

It was painfully clear to the Queen's indignant ladies that the King had no chance of recovery in the hands of Warren and his submissive colleagues (Baker, Heberden, Gisborne, Reynolds, and Hawkins), "and some of the Windsor apothecaries," who were far too much afraid of that medical autocrat, the Prince's favourite, ever to dare to dissent from him. "The physicians seem to be amusing themselves as they would with any other singular character and feel no more for him than they would for a dog or a cat." Mrs. Harcourt was not admitted to her royal mistress's house, but she remained at hand in case she might be wanted, and she heard rather more of what passed than the prisoners within the Lodge. The King afterwards told how he was at one time kept with his arms pinioned behind him and his legs tied to the bedpost: "How could a man sleep?" as he asked. Only Sir Lucas Pepys, when added to the number of physicians, maintained that the patient might very likely recover, but his colleagues were indignant, and the poor Queen was by this time sunk too far in despair to be able to hope for the best.

As the physicians wished first to abate the fever, the King was not allowed a fire, lest it should heat him; and his room was kept so cold that his pages could not endure it for more than two hours at a time, while the doors and windows were screwed up—presumably lest he should run away; he was literally a prisoner, like the poor wretches confined in common mad-houses.

When Warren for once permitted the King to see his family it was in a manner so dramatic as quite to upset

[1] Harcourt Papers, vol. v.

their composure. They were asked to walk in the garden past the windows of the King's room. The poor King ran to the window, tried to open it, found it fast, and beat on the glass, trying to shout so as to make himself heard. Princess Elizabeth nearly fainted at the sight of his wild appearance and white face.

In order that they might themselves be nearer to London the Prince and the doctors desired to have the King removed to Kew, saying also, quite truly, that it was desirable that he should be where he could walk in a private garden. Unfortunately the King had taken a great dislike to Kew, which, besides, was only furnished for summer, and was not ready for habitation, so it was with the utmost reluctance that the Queen gave her consent. When she yielded a privy council meeting was held to confirm the removal, and it was agreed that the Chancellor and the Prime Minister should see the King. Thurlow came away weeping and tottering from the excess of his feelings. Pitt, more calm, reported that his Majesty had talked quite sensibly, but that he was not able to keep to the same topic for long together. No doubt it was this interview, together with the verdict of old Dr. Addington, which enabled the Prime Minister to resist the assumption made by Warren that the King was incurable.

Pitt, it should be explained, was hardly of as much importance in the eyes of the royal family as was the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow. When the news of the King's fit of insanity, on 5th November, reached the cabinet, it was Thurlow who at once (6th November) betook himself to Windsor to see the Prince of Wales. Pitt came to consult the Prince also (12th and 15th November), but on 17th November the Prince refused to see him. This appeared to mean a deadlock, but on the 23rd, having vainly waited till then for directions or information, Pitt went to the Queen to ask whether Dr.

Addington, who had been physician to Chatham in his strange illness in 1767, and was experienced in mental cases, might see the King. Charlotte hesitated, but finally sent Pitt word through Lady Courtown that, if the Duke of Montagu and Lord Aylesbury (as two chief officers of the Household) would join him in making a formal request, she would consent. They did as she suggested, and the Prime Minister brought the old doctor as soon as was feasible (28th November). The minister was left to wait in the outer court like a footman, but Dr. Addington was admitted. The King knew him, asked after Pitt, and insisted upon seeing him, and either this interview or the report of Dr. Addington convinced Pitt of the scandalous maltreatment his sovereign was enduring, and of the necessity for other action. In the meantime Thurlow and some other members of the cabinet were drinking wine with the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and Warren, and as they went away called out to the attendants that the Prince was "a glorious jolly dog!"

The Prince now suggested to his mother that there was no necessity for her to go to Kew, she could stay at Windsor or go to her palace in London. When she refused he went so far as to say he "was resolved upon it." It was the critical moment foreseen by Mrs. Harcourt, and Charlotte suddenly flashed into resolution: "Prince of Wales!" she cried, "do it at your peril; where the King is I shall be." And seeing that the King was to be moved to Kew, she gave orders to transfer herself and a part of her household thither.

The Queen's departure was used as an enticement to draw the demented King into allowing himself to be driven to Kew. Force no one dared to hint at, partly because some kind of rumour of harsh treatment had got abroad, and any sign of violence to the sovereign would have produced a local rising of the country folk to defend him. The mob had already stopped Sir George Baker's

carriage to ask him for news, and when he replied that it was bad, "the more shame for you" they shouted.

If his Majesty would come to Kew, the doctors told him, he should see his wife and daughters, for whom he was continually asking, and only by this bribe was he induced to enter the coach.

In the meantime the Queen had set out: "drowned in tears she glided along the passage" and got softly into her carriage with two weeping princesses and Lady Courtown, who was her lady-in-waiting during this dreadful period. "Then followed the third princess with Lady Charlotte Finch. They went off without any state or parade, and a more melancholy scene cannot be imagined. There was not a dry eye in the house. The footmen, the housemaids, the porter, the sentinel—all cried even bitterly as they looked on."[1]

At Kew they found that the Prince of Wales had been interfering already, and that by his orders not the usual set of apartments, but less convenient rooms, were to be occupied. The name of each individual was chalked on the door of the room assigned, as if in an inn.

The room given to the poor King himself was very small, the chimney usually smoked, it had not been properly prepared, and the walls were actually running down with damp when, on that bitterly cold 29th of November, he was brought there like a prisoner. He eagerly claimed the promised visit of his wife—and was refused. His keepers had never had any intention of fulfilling their word, nor, indeed, did the Queen dream of seeing him, and she was "very angry at having promises made in her name which could not be kept." The King was terribly hurt and upset by this refusal. He is said to have possessed himself of Charlotte's picture, and to have addressed it pathetically: "We have been

[1] Miss Burney.

married twenty-eight years, and never have been separated a day till now, and now you abandon me in my misfortunes."[1]

The same devotion to unhealthy discomfort prevailed at Kew as at Windsor. The princesses themselves were lodged in carpetless rooms, and it seems to have required a considerable degree of courage in the Queen's Vice-Chamberlain, Colonel Digby,[2] to venture the suggestion that strips of carpet should be purchased to place beside their beds, while the unlucky attendants had to stand about continually in cold, dark, and damp passages.

Pitt, however, was taking steps. With the aid of Thurlow and the Harcourts he brought forward the suggestion that a specialist in mental cases, a clergyman-doctor well known for his wonderful success in curing his patients, should be added to the physicians. Charlotte was at first very unwilling, because this amounted to an acknowledgement that the King was insane, but Lady Harcourt helped to persuade her, and Dr. Willis was sent for. He came accompanied by one of his sons, for he was an old man, and so soon as he had seen the royal patient he declared that he had every hope of his recovery.

By the wish of the cabinet and the Queen, Dr. Willis, with his two sons to help him, now took principal charge of the King, but it was not possible to oust the other doctors. All had a share of responsibility and had to sign the bulletins; so that for some long while the medical authority was, so to speak, in commission among men who disagreed.

[1] Cobbin's "Georgiana."
[2] Miss Burney's Mr. Fairly.

CHAPTER VI

THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE OF WALES, AND THE FIRST REGENCY BILL—THE KING'S RECOVERY AND THE REJOICINGS—WEYMOUTH (1788-1790)

DURING the winter of 1788-9 a twofold struggle was raging round the almost passive figure of the Queen. Within the palace the Willises strove for the King's reason, hampered by the ill-will of the Prince, the insolence of the pages, who would not wait properly upon the patient, and the jealousy of Warren, who blamed and argued every step, and traduced the self-sacrificing physician as a charlatan and a time-server of the Queen's. Nothing but loyalty and pity, said old Dr. Willis, kept him at his difficult post, nearly worn to death as he was by neglects and insults and by attendance upon inquisitive and factious parliamentary committees, who kept him waiting on them for hours together till Mrs. Harcourt asked indignantly if they wished to kill the old man.

Outside the silent palace at Kew the world of politics was convulsed by the question of a Regency. The very word was terrible to Charlotte and her daughters, as suggesting that the King and Queen were to be deposed. To London, and very shortly to the rest of the kingdom, it meant a complete change in the government; and personal and party feeling ran very high.

The simple facts were that William Pitt, already Prime Minister for nine years, had been the King's choice, but that Fox would be the Prince's. If the Prince,

as Regent, had the complete powers of sovereign, the King, if he ever recovered, would find it impossible to restore his own system of government, and perhaps could not resume even in form the reins of government. On the other hand, if the Queen had any share of power, she would be certain to yield to the King's wishes if he could express them, and would support Pitt, the King's minister, who was also (it must be added) supported by far the greater part of the nation, although a strong opposition hampered him in Parliament. The House of Commons, in the days of the true Whig constitution, was often very far from reflecting national feeling, and the great Whig connection, foiled for the last six years by the King, Pitt, and the nation, was jubilant with hope of a rapid restoration to power at the hands of Fox's boon companion, the Prince of Wales.

Pitt, however, refused to allow the Opposition's claim that the Prince had "a natural right" to be Regent and to act immediately, and introduced a Bill to confer the Regency upon him with certain restrictions, the chief of which were, that he must not create peerages, except for his brothers, and that the royal Household and the care of the King should be left to the Queen; further restrictions safeguarded the rights of the King should he recover, but there was nothing to prevent the Regent from dismissing present ministers.

The Opposition[1] alleged the most admirable reasons for combating these clauses and endeavouring to secure to the Prince the power of creating any of them peers and of changing all the Household. The natural love of father and son, the natural anxiety of the son to protect the father, were proclaimed in the same eloquent terms as the natural right of a Prince of Wales to govern the country. What indignation, it was urged, would his Majesty feel, should he after all recover his reason, upon finding that

[1] See Note 1 at end.

his son had been set aside in the royal Household and authority entrusted to "a person not of his Majesty's blood"—his wife: to place the Queen in so invidious a position involved a threat to her natural moderation from which she ought to be protected.

The extreme passion displayed was upon account of the Household posts. They numbered some 150, and carried salaries varying from £1,800 to £60. Among the holders were eighteen peers and many members of the House of Commons, and the Opposition reckoned upon dividing the spoils—which would also secure votes.

It was, therefore, assumed by Fox, Burke, and their companions that every virtue was assured in the Prince of Wales while every possible contingency of folly and treachery must be guarded against in the Queen. "Is it the House of Hanover or the House of Strelitz that is to govern the country?" cried Burke, in a sudden passion of loyalty. He did not suspect the Queen, he declared, of ever intentionally acting with impropriety, "but situations and temptations may pervert the purest mind and draw it aside from the path of rectitude." The Prince's rectitudinal paths, however, were so well known by this time that the beautiful sentiments of the Opposition produced less than their usual effect; most people being well aware that it was some years since the princely paragon had shown even common decency towards his father; and some knowing that his control of the Household would mean a confusion, extravagance, and neglect which would render ordinary comfort impossible to his parents.

London was growing disgusted by the heartless zest with which the Prince and the Duke of York spread abroad details of their father's delirium, and at the ribald treatment of the names of the King and Queen by their shameless boon companions. Even timid Lord Mansfield could not help exclaiming: "I hear they want to disparage the Queen. Are they all insane? Why, her Majesty has

more character than all of them together!" While the redoubtable Duchess of Gordon turned upon scurrilous Jack Payne with: "You little, insignificant, good-for-nothing upstart, you pert chattering puppy—how dare you name your master's royal mother in that style!"

The Opposition could not defeat the Regency Bill, but they could protract the stages and thus postpone the day of the Queen's control within the palace. Accordingly, they demanded another interview with the doctors, especially Willis, and gave out that Lady Harcourt (for whom the Queen had sent in her distress) and Lady Charlotte Finch should be cross-examined too, a threat which needlessly scared both Charlotte and her ladies.

The object was to put it about that the bulletins were dictated or altered by the Queen, and did not represent the truth; for in the first weeks of 1789 some improvement began to be noted in the King's condition, and the new theory of the Opposition was that her Majesty would use Dr. Willis to declare the King sane, and then govern in his name. They began to inquire into her disposal of her income, and asked why she had an extra £16,000 a year from the Civil List, over and above her £40,000. It was, replied Pitt, for charity. £12,000 being assigned to charities recognized by custom, the remainder to charitable purposes named by the Queen herself.

The attempt to discredit Willis and the Queen together, by insinuating that the King had been hurt by the doctor's rashness in letting him see the Queen and Princess Amelia, failed. The old clergyman was not to be browbeaten, and sturdily declared that the oftener the King saw the Queen the better. The highly-coloured accounts spread about by the rakes of Brooks's, and by which the sensible Sir Gilbert Elliot[1] was converted into

[1] Afterwards Lord Minto. "She is playing the devil, and has been all this time at the bottom of the cabals and intrigues against the Prince . . ." he wrote (29th December 1788). There is a complete

an enemy of her Majesty, are apparently to be traced through Jack Payne to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, who had them from Dr. Warren. The evidence of the Prince and Payne, at all events, would hardly be credited on any other subject. Warren's method was to some extent revealed during the examination; he gave certain replies with an air of mystery, and stopped short as if concealing something. Fox, playing up to him, said that he concluded that *delicacy towards a great personage* prevented him from saying more; Warren appeared to acquiesce, but Pitt and Dundas intervened, bluntly insisting on no *delicacies*, and desired the precise details, whereupon Warren was obliged to own lamely that there were none. It was of a piece with his assertion that the Queen had apologized to him; she had one morning asked to see the doctors—and had afterwards observed that she was sorry she did not know that they were then breakfasting!

It was clear that the Opposition had overshot their mark, and Charlotte's faithful servants began to draw breath. "What can it signify," asks one, "what the Club at Brookes's say of her? are they the English nation? and can their malice destroy the character that has stood for twenty-seven years in various trying situations, and is beloved, approved of, and almost venerated by the people at large?" In the Commons, Pitt, rebuking factious slander, "hoped gentlemen would be explicit and rise superior to any insinuation with respect to a great personage who had resided near thirty years among us, and on whose character not even slander dared attempt to fix a stain."

The astute Chancellor, Warren's patron, but, as the King had always supposed, personally devoted to him-

change of tone in his letters between 20th November and 29th December. He had selected the Speakership as his own office, but his wife laughed at him.

self, saw how the wind was beginning to sit, and felt apprehensive as to the intrigues he had been carrying on with Fox behind Pitt's back, and the first indication of the King's amendment was given to the political world by Thurlow's support of the Prime Minister on the question of the doctors, which secured at last for Dr. Willis the instructions of the Cabinet that he was to have his way in the treatment of the King.

Thenceforward the King's progress was more rapid. Charlotte saw him again on 18th January, when he would not let her go, but talked on about books and a certain sermon he had found consoling, till Willis observed that the room was chilly and might perhaps injure her Majesty. Charlotte came away rejoiced, and ordered copies of the sermon to give to her faithful ladies.

But the King's progress fluctuated, and the Queen's spirits ebbed so low again by the end of the month that it was feared she would break down. In addition to her grief for the King she had the knowledge of her sons' infamous conduct, and of the cruel slanders of the Opposition to weigh on her. It was the first time she had been seriously and publicly traduced, and she was hurt and angry.

The news of the relapse of course made the Opposition jubilant. One of the royal pages, Ernst,[1] was in the interest of the Duke of Cumberland, to whom he used to send all the worst reports, which were instantly circulated, and the Opposition ladies now showed themselves in "Regency Caps," described as "mountains of tumbled gauze with 3 long feathers in front, tied together with a knot of ribbon" on which was printed in gold letters the motto: "Honi soit qui mal y pense—de la Régence." Pittite ladies endeavoured, but it is to be feared with less *éclat*, to retaliate in "Constitutional Coats."

[1] Mrs. Papendiek, quite independently, observes on Ernst's disagreeable nature.

The month of February again brought an improvement, and Charlotte was vexed by Warren's refusal to permit the public bulletins to mention it. She sent for him to ask why; it was, he said, from his devotion to truth. She replied that her own love of truth made her dislike the bulletins being no better, when the King was manifestly mending. Warren (who had declared that a man sane for twenty-three hours of the day, but delirious for the twenty-fourth, was as incurably mad as a man delirious for the whole twenty-four) said that his Majesty was still *disturbed*. In what way? asked the Queen; he cried a great deal, said the doctor. "If you call that being disturbed," she answered, "then indeed is the whole house disturbed." Her anxiety about the Regency Bill made her very exacting and even harsh to the long-suffering household, and Miss Burney's picture of the distress endured is melancholy.

Fortunately Warren could no longer interfere in the treatment of the King, who was taken out of doors as soon as Willis had complete control—a change which the other physicians had constantly promised and as constantly withheld, till the poor King was goaded to fury.

But there was a grievous difficulty in the way of taking him for a drive. Etiquette could not permit any one of lower status than an equerry to sit in the same carriage with the King, and it would hardly be safe for an equerry to take the responsibility. Charlotte could not see what was to be done; neither she nor the princesses dared venture, she said, yet she could not think the King fit to drive alone. The notion that the doctor must accompany him was sure to appear so shocking that Willis got his good friend, Lady Harcourt, "to break it to her." Lady Harcourt succeeded admirably, and for the sake of the King's health Charlotte permitted this breach of etiquette.

The family felt it to be very remarkable that after

driving out and walking in the garden his Majesty should sleep so much better, and that when his daughters came to walk with him the effects were still more beneficial. "The air is certainly of more use to him than anything," they report.

At last on 20th February, Augusta could write to "my dearest Gooly" (who had gone away for a rest, worn out) "we had the happiness of a Visit from my dear Papa. Last night he came upstairs at 7 and staid till half-past nine . . . he was so composed, so kind, so exactly what you and all our real friends could wish." Lady Charlotte Finch was rejoiced to see that the King's delirious resentment against the Queen had vanished with returning health—he sat kissing her hand, and constantly, in the days which followed, brought her gifts—"it was the attention of a lover." "The Queen, the Queen is my friend," he kept ejaculating, "and no man could have a better."

These brighter days had encouraged Charlotte to relax her edict of seclusion, and even to receive, in a kind of miniature state, of which the papers made a jest, a deputation from the ministerial party bringing her an address of confidence. But she was reluctant to let her two eldest sons see their father, lest some ill-behaviour should irritate the King's nerves. When she could no longer put the day off the two princes came several hours late, so that the interview only lasted half an hour. The princes loudly complained that their mother and the three princesses had been present all the time, and they actually showed by their dejected looks the chagrin they felt at the King's self-possession, and tried to convince their boon companions that they had really only witnessed a lucid interval.

They covered themselves with contempt in vain. Even Warren had to allow that the King was recovering, and amid the unfeigned joy of almost the entire nation, the Regency Bill was dropped. Early in March it was

officially announced that his Majesty was well, and the visible proof was given by the return of the royal family to Windsor on the 14th.

It seemed as if adequate means of expression were hardly to be found for the intensity of the people's joy. A public thanksgiving was appointed, and London decreed a general illumination; the French and Spanish ambassadors gave splendid fêtes, and the principal clubs, balls. But when the polite French ambassador, and an envoy from White's, came to ask the Queen whom she would like to be invited to their respective fêtes she was much embarrassed, because, she said, she knew not the King's wishes.

There was, of course, a fête at Windsor, and a grand Drawing Room at the Queen's House, to which the whole of society thronged. Here, as over the whole of London, every lady appeared wearing the loyal *bandeau* with "God save the King" upon it. The Queen and the princesses had it worked in precious stones. The Queen, indeed, must have been almost entirely covered with jewels; besides this device her hair supported a great cluster of diamonds, and over her shoulders five rows of diamonds and three of pearls formed a belt or chain from which hung the King's miniature, framed in diamonds. Thus resplendent, she sat beneath a gorgeous canopy on a chair of state, and as the throng filed past her it was observed that she intimated by her manner what were her feelings towards those among the Peers or the members of the Lower House who had tried to exclude her from control of the palace and Household, and towards those who had defended her claims. Perhaps, when politics had become so glaringly personal there was no expecting the Queen to pretend herself to have been deaf and blind, but the Prince of Wales and the Opposition made great capital out of these intimations.

London upon the night of illuminations (10th March)

must have been a splendid and impressive sight. For once Charlotte and her daughters ventured to see a popular demonstration, and drove from Apsley House (then Lord Bathurst's) for a considerable distance through the brilliant streets. Lights were blazing in literally uninterrupted lines from Highgate and Hampstead to Clapham, and from Kensington to Greenwich. Even the poorest cobblers' stalls were set out with farthing dips, and only at Carlton House did a very perfunctory lighting up betray the sullen temper of the King's eldest son.

For a few weeks the Queen had to give herself up to rejoicings, and in her happiness and triumph became even lighthearted—to judge by an extremely cheerful letter bidding Lord and Lady Harcourt welcome to the festivities. She is determined, she concludes, "to Eat Chicken in order to appear more beautifull when I see you next, but in case it does not succeed, believe me Equally, handsom as Chicken can make me, or Ogly as I am, your sincere friend, Charlotte."

The thanksgiving was not held until 23rd April, and to Charlotte's dismay the King insisted upon being present himself at the great service at St. Paul's. She feared it might overcome his self-control, and implored doctor and minister to persuade him to give up the idea. But the King's obstinacy—which must have convinced them all of his normal health—prevailed, and Charlotte had to bear through a four hours' service the strain of severe anxiety, enhanced by the conduct of her sons. Fox and Fitzpatrick, says an eyewitness, with remarkable insolence placed themselves in front of the altar directly opposite to the King. "The Prince of Wales, Dukes of York, Cumberland, and, I am sorry to say, Gloucester, talked to each other the whole service and behaved in such an indecent manner that it was quite shocking . . . in the face of an amazing concourse of persons and of all the

foreign ministers."[1] "Under the mask of attention to their father and mother the Prince and Duke of York commit every possible outrage and show every insult they can devise to them. . . . I believe the King's mind is torn to pieces by his sons."[1]

Endless were the stories related of their shocking conduct, and they took pains to mark their particular discourtesy to their mother, as upon the occasion of the ball given by the French Ambassador, where the two princes showed themselves in order to ignore the Queen and princesses, and to flout both dance and supper. Little wonder that her Majesty was reported to have looked gloomy and ill pleased.

The King felt his sons' conduct deeply, and began to talk of visiting Hanover. His health was not completely re-established, and throughout the summer his evident weakness, and occasional fits of alarming perturbation, kept the Queen in constant anxiety, and reduced her spirits to the lowest ebb. Her husband's manner seemed altered in some way, but "though there may be more indifference in his manner and [less] ease in his mind than formerly," writes Mrs. Harcourt, "he still seems to have much more than a common degree of benevolence and love of contributing to the happiness of those around him when they give him an opportunity. I say this because the Queen and the princesses have such timidity lest they offend him that they keep their wishes too generally unknown to him, though it seems as if when laid before him he has no greater pleasure than in obliging them."

Apparently the King had become still more suspicious than before. He studied the newspaper reports of his illness and of the debates on the Regency Bill, and noted the conduct of politicians from the division lists. But he

[1] Lord Bulkely to the Marquis of Buckingham.

would not always speak openly to his family upon his preoccupations; he kept them "at a degree of distance that prevents perfect cordiality and confidence," and he used to keep any subject he disliked out of the conversation very skilfully. "I wish the King were more open with his family who love him," Mrs. Harcourt comments, "I wish he was more generous in many matters and less suspicious of mankind's intentions, then he would be as near perfection as human nature can admit of."

His study of past events, at any rate, convinced him that the one man who had stood by him was Pitt, that he had, in fact, kept the crown upon the royal head. Charlotte, too, helped to strengthen Pitt's position. He had been her defender, ably seconded by Dundas, and she never henceforth wavered in her belief in him. Pitt's political position had been considerably strengthened by the disputes over the Regency Bill, and continued to be unassailable for many years to come.

Within the royal family a certain change was inevitable. There would always be some alarm about the King, always a possible doubt of his competence or of his intentions. The Queen gained in importance, as it was seen that the King trusted to her; and it was likely that, if the King should weaken further, her influence would increase. Perhaps it was this, as much as the scurrilous abuse of "the Prince of Wales's Opposition"—as the term now was—which excluded her from a share in the increased credit of Pitt or the popular affection for the King. She was spoken of in a grudging manner; the mirth of London was provoked by her presentment in some of the cleverest caricatures of the day, and a kind of tepid unpopularity gathered about her name, destined to be intensified in her old age by her treatment of daughter-in-law and grandchild.

The breach in the royal family was now patent, and

some blame was always assigned to the Queen. She herself had been terribly hurt; she said that there were some parts of the Prince of Wales's conduct she could never forget, and in particular that when she had written to him he had set Sheridan to write the answers in his name. It was, however, against the Duke of York that her resentment was most fierce, for on him she laid the terrible responsibility of having, by his calculated violence, finally precipitated the King into insanity. In vain did the Duke, perceiving at last his own folly, attempt with the help of Princess Augusta to placate her; even when, in later years, there was a considerable amendment in his conduct, the Queen could not think it genuine; he only aimed, she believed, at wheedling the King into paying his debts.

Charlotte's bitterness against her second son unfortunately became evident upon the occasion of the duel between the Duke of York and Colonel Lennox. The latter, heir to the dukedom of Richmond, had been a favourite with the King, who had advanced him in the army contrary to the wish of the Duke, his superior officer. Lennox, during the late troubles, had vented his loyalty to his sovereigns and his dislike of York in a manner sufficiently pointed, and the irritation on both sides culminated in the Duke waiving his royal privilege and insisting upon receiving Lennox's challenge. When they met, the Duke fired in the air, but Lennox apparently did his best to kill his adversary, and his bullet actually touched the Duke's hair.

The Prince of Wales instantly utilized the incident to terrify the King, and afterwards reported that though his Majesty was distressed the Queen stood unconcernedly by the window, merely observing that she understood it was the Duke's own fault. It has to be remembered that no reliance can be placed on the Prince of Wales's version of any incident, and that Charlotte's principal

thought was always to calm the King; nevertheless, her subsequent cold behaviour to the Duke, and her marked friendliness to Lennox, were commented on by others. Lennox had been one of the Queen's champions in society, and possibly her unwonted condescension—waving to him and peeping at him through her fan at a court ball—was meant to acknowledge this. But the impression conveyed is unpleasant, whatever excuse may be allowed to harassed nerves.

The Opposition felt it wise to yield to the current of popular sympathy for the King. They had no scruples about the Queen, and their gossip and even slander was no doubt widely caught up. The Queen as the harsh mother became almost a stock conception. She was credited by the princes with keeping the King in a kind of subjection; even Horace Walpole pities his Majesty for awakening to the discovery of the Queen's errors, and repeats a tale that she had talked him into adding a codicil to his will of immense advantage to herself. With similar animus Lady Sarah Lennox describes how her brother-in-law, Conolly—who had been a member of the famous Irish deputation to offer the Prince the Regency of Ireland—had presented himself at the Royal levée: "but H.M. *rump'd* him: so he did not go to the Queen's drawing-room for fear she should be all condescension to him, as it's understood the plan is to make the poor King bear all the odium of anger and *she* is to be all *goodness*."

Charlotte seldom had any opportunity of retorting on her critics. When, some years later, Miss Napier, Lady Sarah's daughter,[1] was presented at court by her aunt, Lady Louisa Conolly, George III remarked in the family circle that she was the handsomest girl he had seen for a

[1] Lady Sarah Lennox, who had run away with Sir William Gordon, was divorced by Sir Charles Bunbury (1774). In 1781 she married Colonel George Napier.

long while. "I wonder your Majesty should think so," observed the Queen.[1]

The terrible strain which Charlotte had borne, dread of the future, distress over the conduct of her sons, and a certain sense of injury, all combined to render her more reserved and severe. Her hair had turned gray during this year, she became a prey to frequent and deep depression, and for some years she was constantly ailing, though she neither complained nor would seek remedies. Public events, too, had their share in spreading gloom over the royal family. England was plunged into an apparently endless war, the horrible scenes of the French Revolution were enacting not very far away, and the ferocity of the rioters in London and elsewhere might well give royalty ground for alarm.

She became more taciturn than ever. When two of her sons were on active service, in 1793, and their sisters were extremely anxious about them, Princess Elizabeth writes: "Mama has such an uncommon share of fortitude that she never allows herself to say a word . . . we make it a rule never to talk about it." "She always said, that did she let herself *once go* she could never conduct herself as she ought." "That little dear word Silence," wrote Charlotte in 1798, "has so often stood my Friend in Necessity that I make it my constant Companion."[2]

The Queen, then, as much as the King, was in need of rest for mind and body, and she was glad to find him for once willing to take the advice of the doctors and seek refreshment in the pleasant climate of the south coast.

The quiet watering place of Weymouth, set in a green paradise on its noble bay, soon became a favourite place of sojourn with the royal family, and thither, in the sum-

[1] Lady Louisa Stuart. [2] Harcourt Papers.

mer of 1789 they ventured for the first time, conveyed in a modest procession of six carriages, sufficient for King, Queen, three princesses, and the suite. "The New Mail" carried the servants. Princesses Mary and Sophia were left behind to their studies at Windsor, and Amelia was already established at Eastbourne, on account of her delicate health.

The delight of the countryside at receiving their sovereigns must have reminded Charlotte of the Cheltenham journey. "At Winchester the town was one head." At Romsey a local orchestra and singers "in common brown coarse cloth and red neckcloths and even in carters' loose gowns made a chorus of 'God save the King,' in which the countless multitude joined." The crowds "wore as picturesque an appearance as the landscapes," and the royal visitors could not but be pleased to see the pleasure of the people. "Carriages of all sorts lined the roadside: chariots, chaises, landaus, carts, waggons, whiskies, gigs, phaetons—filled within and surrounded without by faces all glee and delight."[1]

The Duke of Gloucester had lent his house on the sea front in Melcombe, and in this and three other houses the royal family established themselves. Weymouth had just begun to attract seaside visitors, for whom it maintained a bad theatre and a good circulating library, though not, before the coming of the King, a mail service. The place was transformed into a seventh heaven of delight. "Every creature wore a ribbon with 'God save the King,'" even the bathing women arranged it on large girdles round their waists, and it was printed in gold letters on all the bathing machines.

The King was to try the virtues of sea bathing. "Think but of the surprise of his Majesty when, the first time of his bathing, he had no sooner popped his

[1] Miss Burney.

royal head under water than a band of music, concealed in a neighbouring machine struck up—'God save Great George our King!'"

Loyalty and court manners do not always go together, and when the Queen consented to receive an address from the Corporation, and to permit the Mayor to kiss her hand, her attendants were horrified to see him remain standing; "You must kneel, sir," whispered the equerry, but Mr. Mayor took no notice, and actually kissed the Queen's hand erect. As he retired the Colonel rebuked him—"You should have knelt, sir,"—"Sir," replied the poor mayor, "I cannot." "Everybody does, sir." "Sir, I have a wooden leg!" which was so disconcerting that the rest of the deputation were left unrebuked to copy their mayor, greatly to the disapprobation of the royal party.

Weymouth proved of so much benefit to the King that the royal family went there repeatedly during the next decade. The princesses enjoyed country life as much as their father, and a pleasant letter from Elizabeth to the Duchess of Ancaster describes their simple pleasures:

Oct. 23, 1791. Windsor.

My dear Duchess,

I must thank you for your kind letter. . . . I cannot put off the pleasure of letting you know that everybody is returned well and contented with Weymouth. The King never was better in his life, which makes us all happier than you can imagine. Mama really is a little fatter, which is a great advantage and pleases us all very much, as we thought she wanted it. You may easily believe that the time we spent there was extremely pleasant, as we had no forms nor nothing that was formal. Of a morning we used to amuse ourselves, that is to say Mama and us with going to the shops, walking, and driving out; of an evening we went very often to the play, and of a Sunday evening allways to the rooms. The

actors were astonishingly good, and going quite at our ease made it remarkably pleasant to us. During the very hot weather which we had for some time Mama used to be drawn into the sea in one of the bathing machines and sit several hours there, but we were not idle, for reading and working were our employments. You cannot imagine how cool and pleasant it was, the machine was so large that it could hold seven or eight people besides a table and a chair, and as we never went so many at a time it was very airy and comfortable. Lord and Lady Chesterfield and Lord and Lady Poulett were for some time the only people that we knew there; afterwards we had Mrs. Harcourt and Mrs. Harvey. Mrs. Harcourt came a week after us and staid all the time we were at Weymouth; several other people came for a few days, amongst others Lord and Lady Salisbury, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Pitt, but they went away very soon. Tho' I have not had the pleasure of writing a great while to you, I hope you know me too well to think me capable of forgetting you. . . . My brother Frederick's wedding has made us all extremely joyful as everything that makes him happy must, but particularly so as he has made choice of so very amiable a princess; indeed the character we heard of her is charming. You may conceive how anxious we are to see her. . . .[1]

[1] Ancaster MSS. H.M.C. (1907).

CHAPTER VII

CHARLOTTE'S LATER LIFE—MARRIAGES OF HER CHILDREN—INSANITY OF THE KING—POSITION UNDER THE REGENCY—CONDUCT TO PRINCESS OF WALES—LAST DAYS—(1792-1818)

A LONG period of life yet stretched before Queen Charlotte when the great crisis of the King's first attack of insanity was past. With that crisis ended for her the epoch of uneventful domestic routine. Public and private necessities alike made it impossible for her to be merely the dutiful wife. The changes which were thus inevitably wrought in her life seldom brought to her anything but anxiety and grief, and she faced them with an ever-increasing stoical calm which merged at length into indifference.

Her relations with several of her children became colder by reason either of their marriages or of their wish to marry. She showed neither sympathy for her daughters-in-law nor disapprobation of the libertinism of her elder sons. As for her daughters, she was satisfied if they avoided open scandal, and that their sole choice lay between a hopelessly dreary life and dubious experiments appears to have concerned their mother little. The first of the sons to marry was the Duke of York, who in 1791 became the husband of the noble looking and charming Frederica of Prussia, daughter of Frederick William II. It was a marriage after the King's own heart. Frederick was his favourite son, and for some years he had been

anxious to see him suitably married and settled in England, where the intimation of the Prince of Wales that he did not intend to contract an avowed marriage made it probable that the Duke of York might eventually succeed to the throne. Considerable state was manifested on the arrival of the bride, entertainments marked the approval of King and Queen. The princesses showed theirs in a more modest and friendly fashion by taking their sister-in-law to their hearts and lavishing on her what little help or attentions lay in their power. Unhappily the Duke treated his wife with neglect, and his extravagant gambling reduced him to undignified straits, so that after six years the Duchess felt compelled to separate from him and live in retirement.

Prince Augustus in 1793 followed the precedent of his eldest brother, and concluded a clandestine marriage with Lady Augusta Murray,[1] which the King of course, by virtue of the Royal Marriage Act, declared to be void. The Prince, however, refused for several years to separate from his wife, but not until he did so, in 1801, would the King create him a peer—as Duke of Sussex, and allow him his full income.

Of the daughters, only the Princess Royal was as yet allowed to marry. She was thirty, when in 1796, the offer of the Hereditary Prince of Würtemberg was entertained, and next year they were married. As has already been said, a proposal from Prince Frederick of Brunswick was rejected by George III, as was another princely suitor who asked for the hand of Sophia in 1801. It was a rueful jest with Princess Elizabeth to call herself "a Noli-me-tangere" in her intimate letters to Lady

[1] She was created Lady d'Armeland in 1806. The two children of the marriage were Sir Frederick d'Este and Ellen, afterwards Lady Truro. The Duke married, after Lady d'Armeland's death, the dowager Lady Buggins in 1831. She was created Duchess of Inverness in 1840.

Harcourt. Her attempts to emancipate herself led to nothing but disaster, which, however skilfully concealed, was ferreted out by the lampooners, and placed her in disgrace in the family (1794) an additional touch of gloom. Princess Mary, as was well known, was attached to her cousin, William (afterwards Duke of Gloucester), but the wishes of both were ignored, hardly because the young Duke was kept in reserve as a possible choice for Charlotte's granddaughter, Princess Charlotte, though this is often stated to have been the case. Unless direct evidence be forthcoming it is hardly possible to credit the Queen with so complete a reversal of her principles as to equal birth as to sanction any scheme of marriage between the son of the unacknowledged Duchess of Gloucester and the heiress of England. It is more likely that this disparity of birth barred Prince William's request for the hand of his cousin, Princess Mary.

But of all the matrimonial and non-matrimonial entanglements of the royal family those of the Prince of Wales were the most amazing, and although Queen Charlotte does not appear to have taken any active part in the *dénouement*, other than that of quietly supporting her son, she incurred a considerable share of blame and her unpopularity during the last years of her life was principally due to her treatment of the unhappy Princess of Wales and Princess Charlotte.

The Prince of Wales had privately married, in 1785, a well-known Roman Catholic lady of birth and fashion, Mrs. Fitzherbert, a fact certainly known both to the royal family and in London society (except, apparently, to Charles Fox). The King had been much annoyed at first, but the peculiar attitude of mind which he and the Queen maintained towards marriage seems to have partially reconciled him to a connection which the rest of the royal family appear to have welcomed, doubtless

because of the partial reformation in the Prince's dissolute habits which Mrs. Fitzherbert for a time effected. A species of logic made it plausible to maintain that this marriage with a Roman Catholic, a breach of the Act of Settlement, would not after all forfeit the Prince's right to the throne, since according to the Royal Marriage Act it was in any case void. On the other hand, it might, from a German point of view, be considered a morganatic marriage (a compromise refused by Lady Augusta Murray) and as the Prince intimated his resolution not to marry otherwise, the King had a certain satisfaction in the hope of the Duke of York's succession.

But in 1795 this well understood condition of things was abruptly altered by the Prince. He was hopelessly in debt and could not expect relief from the King. There remained the chance of an appeal to Parliament. But Parliament and the nation took an altogether different view of morganatic marriages from their majesties, while of the two Princes, the Duke of York was at this time even more unpopular than his elder brother, nor had he any children after four years of wedlock. Parliament, it was made clear by the ministers, would not give the Prince of Wales a second outfit unless for the purpose of contracting a proper marriage.

The Prince's love for Mrs. Fitzherbert was not strong enough to stand the test, and he promptly announced himself ready to marry any suitable princess.

Charlotte wished her son to wed one of her nieces at Strelitz, but the King—with a sudden change of his attitude towards his sister Augusta, the Duchess of Brunswick—fixed upon her daughter, his own niece, Caroline, although he had, earlier, informed the Duchess pointedly that he disapproved of marriages between first cousins.

To Charlotte such a match was distasteful. She was

still moved by her ancient rancour towards the Duchess of Brunswick, and possibly she may have been aware, through her Mecklenburg correspondence, of certain peculiarities in the destined bride which would render her unlikely to prove a suitable wife or daughter-in-law.

Whether any princess, however tactful, could have tolerated life with the Prince of Wales may well be doubted. When Frederica of Prussia failed with the second of Charlotte's sons, Caroline of Brunswick assuredly had no chance with the eldest. But in any case, it is sufficiently shocking to find that Charlotte, while the official embassy was actually conducting the youthful bride to England, was so complaisant to the Prince as openly to encourage at court his new mistress, Lady Jersey, whose wiles were more than suspected of helping him to break with Mrs. Fitzherbert.[1]

Lady Jersey's character was not of the stamp understood to be approved by the Queen, yet the Queen invited her to her private parties and actually appointed her first Lady of the Bedchamber to the new Princess of Wales.

The arrangements for the reception of Caroline lay certainly in the hands of the Queen. An eminently suitable envoy as to character had been chosen in the first Lord Malmesbury, although the humble rank of his family, and his own very recent elevation to the peerage, perhaps made the choice scarcely courteous; the Prince of Wales continued to call this confidential servant "Harris." No peeresses were sent; if Charlotte recollected her own journey, it was not in order to copy that procedure for her daughter-in-law. She despatched only one English lady, Mrs. Harcourt, whom, like Malmesbury, she could certainly trust, but who was of no high rank; while to welcome the Princess at Greenwich she

[1] *See* "Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV."

sent Lady Jersey, who kept the Princess waiting for an hour, and then was rude to her. An elderly equerry of the Queen's, Mr. Stanhope, completed the suite.

If this delivery of a young bride into the hands of an experienced and malicious rival may be regarded as anything but an insult to her daughter-in-law, it can only be by supposing the Queen to have been as wax in the hands of the Prince of Wales, or so desirous of pleasing him that she would hesitate before no considerations of either decency or justice. Certainly a considerable change had taken place in the relations of mother and son by 1795. Possibly the dire unpopularity of both the King and the Prince at this moment, and the dread of revolution, had made Charlotte wish for union in her family beyond all else. The King was showing himself very much pleased by his son's marriage. The son, on the contrary, regarded his chains with aversion, and his mother seems to have been particularly anxious to please him. Writing a refusal to a lady who had made application for a post, she says: "The Prince of Wales, when here, interested himself for Miss Seymour Coleman, and I am determined to oblige him; a little douceur from me to him is my inclination always; but at present *j'aime encore mieux à la faire*."[1]

Some years before Miss Burney had observed how deep-seated was the Queen's affection for her first-born, and how firmly she clung to the belief that his misconduct could not really spring from his own nature:

I was much touched with a sort of unconscious confidence with which she relieved her mind. She asked me my opinion of a paper in the "Tatler" which I did not recollect; and when she was dressed and seated in her sitting-room [at Kew] she made me give her the book and read to me this paper. ["Tatler" of 9th June, 1709?] It is an account of a young

[1] Harcourt Papers.

man of good heart and sweet disposition, who is allured by pleasure into a libertine life, which he pursues by habit, but with constant remorse, and ceaseless shame and unhappiness.

It was impossible for me to miss her object: all the mother was in her voice while she read it, and her glistening eyes told the application made throughout. . . . She looked pensively down when she had finished it, and before she broke silence, a page came to announce the Duchess of Ancaster.

If the Prince of Wales had at last understood the folly of alienating both father and mother, and had concluded that it would be more profitable to ally with the Queen, now that Pitt was pledged to her, it could not be difficult to win her forgiveness. His native charm of manner was no doubt still at his command, and Charlotte was probably ready to yield to him upon every point but that of sacrificing to him the King.

From the first the Prince poured out to his mother his disgust at the wife provided for him by his father, nor did the Queen or the princesses (whose support the Prince never lost) ever regard the unfortunate Princess of Wales but as a stumbling-block and a discredit. Charlotte went further; she openly lent herself to countenance his insults to his young wife. Only a month after the birth of the Princess Charlotte the Queen gave one of her select private parties. The Princess of Wales was unable to be present, and Lady Jersey was invited to meet the Prince and seated at a card-table beside Princess Augusta, when the Prince kept coming up to the table and openly squeezing her hand. The King was understood to disapprove of "the Carlton House system," but he could not interfere; the Queen manifestly did not disapprove, and the Prince was all attention to her, constantly bringing her gifts, often of considerable value. It is not wonderful if severe comments were made upon the Queen's "hypocrisy."

With a kind of odd compensation, it was George III

who made difficulties about the marriage of the Princess Royal. The Hereditary Prince of Würtemberg, a gallant and honourable but not outwardly attractive man, had been encouraged to come to ask for her hand in 1796. He was a widower, and his first wife, who was George III's niece, Caroline of Brunswick's elder sister, had met in Russia with a gloomy fate, understood, even by her family, to be the outcome of her own misconduct. Great was the surprise and indignation of the Prince to find that the King of England appeared to regard him as a suspicious character and required proofs of his wife's death. Letters had to be fetched from Russia, and the Prince was obliged to wait for some months in England in the ridiculous position of an unaccepted but unrejected suitor. He declared to one of his friends that he really "wondered whether he were himself," and he would have given up his suit but for the tactful management of the Queen, who entertained him pleasantly at Frogmore, and in 1797 witnessed the marriage, which took place there very privately.

Charlotte's reluctance to allow any notice to be taken of the Princess Royal's wedding—she would only permit Lady Harcourt to look at the trousseau with an injunction to remember that the Queen did not wish it spoken of—was only one sign of the devotion to privacy and almost permanent depression of spirits under which she laboured during most of the decade 1790-1800. Miss Burney had been surprised by the Queen's insistence upon secrecy when she resigned her post in 1791. This state of mind was partly the effect of the terrible strain of the King's illness in 1788-9, partly, no doubt, of unpleasant family difficulties; it was probably prolonged by Charlotte's disgust at the caricatures and ballads which made so free with every fault and scandal, even with every absurdity, reported of the royal family. Gillray draws the Hereditary Prince of Würtemberg as an

obese lout, and the Prince of Hesse-Homburg as scarcely human. The furious riots in London seemed to give more importance to unpopularity, and Charlotte was almost morbidly anxious that the royal family should lead a private life. She purchased Frogmore in 1792, expressly because she could be private there with her daughters. "I am of oppinion that the quieter one keeps at present the more prudent it must be," she wrote in December 1795.

This gloomy shadow extended itself even to the autumn holiday at Weymouth. Mrs. Harcourt, in September 1792, noted that though the King was remarkably well, the Queen was looking very ill. She was low and languid, and had been growing worse for some months, and now had a bad foot and could not go out much. She still, however, performed as usual the civilities she regarded as duties—going to the rooms on Sunday evenings, standing about or drinking tea, from eight till ten, in the midst of a circle of two or three hundred people, "none of which, except the Lady Beauforts and three or four men, one ever heard of."

Charlotte had not even been able to solace herself with her favourite recreation of the theatre, still, as she told Miss Burney, by far her chief pleasure, for fear lest the boxes on either side of that reserved for the royal party might be occupied by somebody they did not "know," "because they have not one acquaintance here." Unpopularity and cold manners had prevented any of the usual courtiers from following the King and Queen to Weymouth. Nor did Royalty hold out much encouragement to courtiers, for though Pitt and Lord Grenville both went dutifully to stay at Weymouth, they were "never asked in."

Mrs. Harcourt's arrival raised the number of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting to two, and Charlotte desired each to take a box, so as to render it proper for the

Queen and Princesses to sit in theirs. "I am ordered," adds Mrs. Harcourt, "to get acquainted with some Yorkshire people that are here (the great Tatton Egertons with £30,000 a year) in order to get them to help with this sitting business at the Play."

The Queen had one compensation, however. Cards were sanctioned again, as a useful distraction to prevent the King from brooding over his worries. She was exceedingly fond of card-playing, which was still, for thousands of people, the natural way of passing spare time. The King had long since forbidden cards in the palace, in the vain hope of checking gambling by this example of renouncing the mild amusement of his wife and daughters. Now every night at Weymouth the same party was arranged; the Queen and Princess Royal played at casino with two of the suite; the King and two more at piquet; Princesses Elizabeth and Augusta, each at a table with three of the suite, indulged in cribbage. It was as dull as any evening at Windsor, and when the royal family went home again, little change was to be found in their ways from one season to another.

The odd thing is that Charlotte herself grumbled at her dull life, just as though it did not lie in her power to change it. She had become so complete a slave to routine that she really could not quit it without help. In 1795 she complains that she sees no one. Only the Chesterfields and Stanhopes come nightly at eight, "and the rest of the day is spent in walking, working, reading, and Drawing and Music. All this will prove to you that our life is not very merry."

Public anxieties also weighed upon the Queen. The cost of the war and the high prices of food were driving the peasantry almost to starvation, and the town mobs rioted furiously. Shouts of "no war," "no King!" greeted George III as he went to open parliament in 1795. Stones were flung, and a shot pierced the window

of the carriage. Princess Elizabeth in the Queen's House shuddered at the howls of the mob, clearly audible. It seemed like the beginning of a revolution. Once, when Charlotte was sitting beside the King in the carriage, one of the stones flung broke through the window and brushed her cheek. Walking together at Windsor one day, they heard fierce insults addressed to them by one or two poor folk, and a woman flung a shoe at the Queen. A few years later, when the King was holding a review in Hyde Park, a shot was fired, possibly by accident, though Charlotte could not believe so, which very narrowly missed the King, and her terrors may well be imagined when on the evening of the same day (15th May 1800), he was a second time fired at, just as he was entering his box at Drury Lane. He at once stood still, a mark for any fresh shot, and merely put up his hand to try to keep back the Queen, who was behind and had not yet reached the box; but the excitement of the audience told her that something was wrong and she hurried on, crying "what is the matter?" "Only a squib, a squib—they are firing squibs," replied the King, as he stood up conspicuous at the front of the box. Lord Chesterfield begged him to step further back: "Not an inch, not an inch," replied George. Charlotte could not be deceived. She hastened to him with clasped hands, in the terror of the moment half forgetting the public scene, and asked imploringly whether they need stay. "We will not stir but sit the entertainment out," was all the intrepid King would answer. And sit it out they did, although, when the four princesses reached the box, Augusta, Mary, and Amelia fainted as soon as they sat down, and Elizabeth had to restore them. Sheridan had very skilfully prevented them from entering with the Queen, while it was yet uncertain whether a lunatic or an assassin was in the house, by an excuse about a pick-pocket making a riot in the pit; by the time they entered

the lunatic, as the man proved to be, had been captured and removed, and Sheridan (or as some accounts have it, another of the company) had produced an additional verse for the national anthem, which was sung amid the greatest enthusiasm by Mrs. Jordan:

> From every latent foe,
> From the assassin's blow,
> God save the King!
> O'er him Thine arm extend,
> For Britain's sake defend
> Our father, prince and friend,
> God save the King!

The Prince of Wales, informed of the incident, hurried to the theatre, for once showing a proper feeling, and his sisters felt his presence a great comfort, which indeed they required, for when they reached home they all fainted again, and Amelia, now very delicate, became seriously ill. All the royal brothers then in England hastened to the Queen's House next day, breakfasted with their sisters, and endeavoured to encourage their mother. But her nerves had sustained a great shock, although she braced herself to give a grand fête at Frogmore to celebrate the King's escape.

She had a double fear to face, for she could never guess what strain might prove too much for the King's mental balance. He was in truth unmoved by physical danger, he possessed the intrepidity of his house. When the shower of stones and a shot had threatened him in the great riot of 1795 he was the least moved of any. The three peers in the coach with him were much agitated: it was the King who reassured them and bade them be still. "My lords," he said to them, "you are supposing this and proposing that, but there is One who disposes of all things, and in Him I trust."

But there was a species of mental agitation which the brave man could not master, and in 1801 the blow which Charlotte had been apprehending since 1789 at length

fell. When Pitt proposed to pass a measure for the relief of the Roman Catholics, practically promised to the Irish in 1800 when the Act of Union was passed, he found the King passionately adverse. He had become possessed by the idea that to sanction such a measure would be a breach of his coronation oath—a suggestion diversely ascribed to the Duke of York, the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Eldon, Lord Auckland, and the Archbishops of Dublin or Canterbury. Perhaps he was capable of originating it himself, at all events he clung to it, and he averred that he would rather lose his kingdom, rather lose his life, than infringe that oath. The sequel, Pitt's resignation, was the final blow, and the King had a second time to be declared insane.

Again Charlotte secluded herself and her daughters. Again she had neither orders to give nor recommendations to make. She could only send Princess Elizabeth to the Prime Minister—now Addington, Pitt's friend, son of good old Dr. Addington, to beg that he would "do what he thought best." Happily the Willises were now able to pursue their treatment unhampered, and the King's illness was so short that by the end of March he was declared to be well again. He was, however, much aged and weakened, and Charlotte lived in constant dread. She herself had no longer the old strength to control her feelings, and she began to withdraw herself from the King's society, living more and more at Frogmore while George remained at Windsor Castle, half a mile away.

All this time the burden of the great war was pressing heavily upon every class in the nation, from the royal family to the poorest. It was believed that to raise the funds necessary for the defence of the country every nerve must be strained,[1] and voluntary subscrip-

[1] Pitt asked for a loan of eighteen millions; it was subscribed in less than sixteen hours.

tions were asked for. The royal family bore their share. Charlotte herself subscribed £5,000 a year. The Prince of Wales "could not give because of his debts," explains his sister Augusta, "but Ernest gives £300 a year, and that 's a tenth of his income for the King allows him 3,000." It was very difficult for the princesses, as they felt, "to do what would not be improper for us and yet not to be generous at Mamma's expense, for that would only have been unjust." They agreed each to give £100 a year, which the King—who made his daughters no allowances—characteristically said "was but little, but he wished particularly nobody should subscribe what would really distress them."[1]

A few years later the Queen, sending her New Year's wishes to Lady Harcourt, could only write: "May the Almighty Continue to protect us in this new Century as He did in the last. I trust He will Continue His protection to us and likewise support our poor Suffering Brethren upon the Continent. Oh! I can never doubt the Justice of Providence; and as He promises that the Just shall not fall with the Wicked, I will put my trust in Him alone and always hope He is near to help us; for I am clear that nothing but the Power of the Almighty can save us all."

Like most people who studied the intelligence from the Continent, Charlotte had no belief in the peaceful intentions of the First Consul, or in the duration of the Peace of Amiens (concluded in 1802). Perhaps she detected an intentional insult in the extraordinary choice Bonaparte had made of an ambassador. She wrote that there was no avoiding receiving this Andréazzi, who displeased her more than anybody she had ever seen, for he had breakfasted upon onions and had brought a very powerful odour of them into the room "and looks so Dirty that He is quite *dégoutant* to me."

[1] Madame d'Arblay (in 1798), vol. v, p. 387.

Yet although "the four walls of the room I inhabit" were, as she said, not inspiring, she could at times reveal a spark of her old love of fun. She disapproved of the rush of English travellers to France as soon as the Peace of Amiens was signed, and was not ill-pleased to be told that most of them were of no particular standing in society. Fox's friends were conspicuous in Paris, and pressed to pay their respects to the First Consul, whose peaceful intentions had for so long been an article of Fox's creed. The Queen could not resist writing to Lord Harcourt a story, which she owned she did not wholly believe, of Bonaparte's aide-de-camp having described a group of these foreigners to his master as apparently being "ce que les Anglais nomment Tag, Rag et Bobtail," and the First Consul, taking these to be proper names, next day addresses Mr. Robert Adair as "Monsieur Bobtail"—"and poor Mr. Adair is very sore about it."

Between 1801 and 1804, the date of the King's next illness, the royal family were living in a state of constant tension. The King, now prone to fits of anger and sudden impulses, was continually irritated by the Prince of Wales and disposed to protect the Princess, towards whom the Queen manifested no feelings but of suspicion and dislike. It was known to some of the inner circle about the court (Lord Redesdale, *e.g.*, and Speaker Abbot) that the Prince himself was "highly discontented; the Queen, the Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth, and the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Sussex taking his part, whilst the Dukes of York, Cumberland, and Cambridge and the younger princesses adhere to the King and . . . the breach every day grows wider."

At the Drawing Room for the King's Birthday in 1801 his Majesty did not appear. The Princess of Wales came, but the Prince was driving about the streets of

London on the box of his own coach, advertising his grudge against the King. This maimed reception was the sole court ceremony of the entire year. Such parties as the Queen allowed herself to invite to Frogmore were exceedingly private and very small. Whether from fear or for other reasons, she now lived almost entirely apart from the King, and would not even dine with him, a refusal which distressed him, though his daughters did their best to supply her place.

The pivot of family contention was the little Princess Charlotte, of whom the King was extremely fond, and for whose education, now that she counted some six years, he was desirous of providing. The Prince knew exactly how to torment his father by keeping the child away, or threatening to do so, or by attaching to every concession some stipulation to debar the Princess of Wales from her little girl.

The Queen herself took very little notice of her granddaughter beyond sending to her some of her own childhood's toys—including a wonderful golden mouse with jewels for eyes; but she tried to get the King to give in quietly to the Prince, and when her own representations had no effect, to instigate Lord Chancellor Eldon to work in the same direction. Eldon, who acted throughout with admirable tact and moderation, had very great influence with the King, and Charlotte (who saw no one herself) bade Princess Elizabeth write to Dr. Willis that the Queen thought it right that the Chancellor should know the King's ideas about the Princess of Wales, since Mr. Dundas knew (the Queen and the Princesses disliked Dundas, they thought him responsible for the trial of Warren Hastings, and, in general, Pitt's evil angel). Willis, in fact, was to tell Lord Eldon, as if from himself, how extraordinary were the King's ideas about giving the child to its mother. "The Queen commands me to add that if you could see her heart you would see

that she is guided by every principle of justice and with a most fervent wish that the dear King may do nothing to form a breach between him and the Prince, for she really lives in dread of it. . . ." "The Chancellor's assistance" (the Queen wanted Willis to say) "is much wanted in preventing the King doing anything that shall harm him."

Eldon was certainly quite capable of dealing with the Queen's transparent little intrigues. He was on excellent terms with the royal family, whom in courtly style he would assure, when appointing to a living or the like, that "their wishes . . . are commands that supersede even promises to others." Probably Charlotte felt the more friendly to him from his having been in youth a *protégé* of her early friend the Duchess of Northumberland.

Perfectly sane as the King always seemed to be with his ministers, admirable as was the scheme of education he drew up for the little princess, who, unfortunately, was never allowed to profit by it, yet in his family circle he showed but too plainly the signs of a weakening mind. He took violent dislikes to some of his best servants, and unhappily to the Willises; to others he was vehemently affectionate. He began to spend money freely and to plan expensive buildings and insist upon prompt execution. The political discord between Addington and Pitt agitated him, and finally the action of the Prince of Wales, who demanded a high rank in the army which he was utterly incompetent to fill, and upon the King's refusal published the correspondence between himself, Addington, and the King, drove the unhappy father to fury. Never, he kept repeating, never could he forgive the man who had published his letters.[1] In

[1] But the "Annual Register" (1803), which professes to give this correspondence, only contains one brief letter of the King's. The Prince's afford sufficient condemnation of his request and his attitude.

February 1804 it was necessary again to declare him insane, and once more Charlotte withdrew into conventual privacy and sent word that "the Queen and family had put themselves entirely in the hands of the Minister" (Addington).

Already the old King had become almost blind. Writing in 1803 to Lady Harcourt, Charlotte speaks of the dear King showing great fortitude, though there were moments when he felt most deeply; "and the necessity of keeping up before him is such a strain upon both body and mind that all Idea of any amusement, excepting what is necessary to enliven him vanishes. . . . Indeed my beloved Friend for this stroke I was not prepared; it is a severe Tryal I will own."

The most pathetic thing about George III's mental collapse was that he was seldom more than partially demented. He never lost consciousness of his royalty nor forgot his family, and his talk, though strange, was usually perfectly connected; he became agitated and angry when he found himself separated from the Queen and his children and left to the ministrations of the Willises and their servants. Indeed Willis maintained that the King was the better for seeing those of his family who soothed and cheered him, but there was, of course, no constraining her Majesty. The Dukes of Cumberland and Kent seem to have done their best to comfort both King and Queen, but even after George was declared well Charlotte avoided seeing him till he vowed to Eldon that he would not sign another paper unless he was allowed to visit his family.

For many months after he was officially declared to have recovered (March 1804) his mind seemed to be wavering, and the gravest alarm was felt by the Queen and all around him. Lady Uxbridge[1] told Lord Malmesbury

[1] Mother of the distinguished general, William Henry Paget, Earl of Uxbridge and Marquis of Anglesey.

that the King's family were quite unhappy, for his temper seemed altered.

"Mrs. Harcourt," notes Lord Malmesbury next day (27th May 1804), "confirmed all Lady Uxbridge had told me—that the King was apparently quite well when speaking to his Ministers or those who kept him in a little awe; but that towards his family and dependants his language was incoherent and harsh, quite unlike his usual character."

The Ministers, in their ill judgement, made things worse—Addington by not suffering the Willises to be called in and giving the King an incompetent doctor—Pitt, when he returned to office once more in May 1804, by leaving the sole disposition of the Household to his Majesty, who, now weak and ultra-suspicious, "had dismissed and turned away and made capricious changes everywhere, from the Lord Chamberlain to the grooms and footmen. He had turned away the Queen's favourite coachman, made footmen grooms and *vice versa*, and what was still worse, because more notorious, had removed Lords of the Bedchamber without a shadow of reason; that all this afflicted the royal family beyond measure; the Queen was ill and *cross*, the Princesses low, depressed, and quite sinking under it."

In December the same diarist comments on the continuance of the Prince's cruel tactics about Princess Charlotte, and notes, "the sons behave tolerably, the Princesses most perfectly. The Queen will never receive the King without one of the Princesses being present; never says, in reply, a word; piques herself on this discreet silence; and when in London locks the door of her *white room* [the boudoir] against him . . . if the Queen did not think the King likely to relapse she would not alter in her manners towards him; and her having altered in her manners proves that she thinks he may relapse."

"I pity the poor Queen," writes another observer;[1] "you can have no idea what she suffers, and I can't explain to you by letter the causes of it."

The autumn visits to the south coast, omitted for a few years before 1801, had been resumed by the King's express desire, and in 1804 the whole party stayed for two months at Cuffnells, the pleasant seat of George Rose, where all found some relief from care. But Rose's description of the visit of the royal family relates almost entirely to the King and princesses, he hardly ever mentions the Queen, who must have kept apart from the drives and walks of her family, but he comments on the perfect cordiality which appeared to exist among them all, although he was privately acquainted with a serious breach of harmony lately caused by the conduct of one of the princesses.

Charlotte was bent upon reconciling the King and the Prince of Wales, and, well seconded by her other children and by Lord Eldon, brought the King at last to agree to a meeting. He had been averse from it because he said he knew the Prince meant to *make a scene*, and he would therefore only see him in the presence of the Queen, the princesses and the Duke of Cambridge. They all, accordingly, assembled at Kew, whereupon the Prince sent word to Eldon that he had "changed his mind and would not go." The Chancellor refusing to take such a message, the Prince wrote to say he was too unwell to come. Deep was the King's indignation, for they had all been waiting at Kew for some time before the paltry excuse arrived. Charlotte begged him to write to the Prince: "No," said the King, "I will write no more letters to the Prince since he published mine." In the end Charlotte's efforts brought about a meeting of father and son, for the first

[1] Fremantle to the Marquis of Buckingham.

time for nearly a year—"for *one day* it went off very well but it did not last."

A gloomy six years followed. The shameful breach between the Prince and Princess of Wales, the death of Pitt, the admission of the hated Charles Fox to office, the renewal of the efforts for Roman Catholic emancipation, and the contemptible revelations about the Duke of York in connection with the Clarke army scandal, were all so many assaults upon the old King's wavering self-command. The distressing symptoms of mental alienation kept recurring. He lived in retirement, at Windsor, could not appear at the fêtes Charlotte from time to time gave at Frogmore, to celebrate a victory or some royal anniversary, though he might be seen driving out with his daughters, or walking with one of them upon the Terrace, until in 1810 the final blow fell with the death of the darling of his old age, Princess Amelia.

Lady Holland asserts that the dying princess ascribed her sufferings and the misery of the last few years to the harshness of the Queen, and that only the persuasions of her eldest brother brought her to forgive her mother.

In truth, the early illness and death of Amelia were partly due (as has lately been amply shown)[1] to a strong and hopeless attachment, well-known to her brothers and sisters, as to her mother, who, however, chose to ignore it. The Queen's sole thought was to hide from the King anything likely to excite him, and she was quite satisfied so long as Amelia forbore to confide in her father and no dangerous gossip spread. When, after three or four years of a secret engagement, gossip did begin to stir, the Queen wrote to her daughter (they never conversed upon intimate topics) two letters[2] almost wholly concerned with her behaviour towards the two old govern-

[1] "The Romance of Princess Amelia," by W. S. Childe-Pemberton.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-65.

esses who threatened disclosure. She urged Amelia to be very polite to them: "I am almost sure that neither Miss Gumm nor Gooly will ever any more hint at it if you will but be civil to them . . . I beseech you by all that is sacred to divest yourself of all anger and suspicion as it is injurious to your Health . . . it is a Religious Duty to take care of one's Health, and to overcome Evil with Good." Thus the Queen glided away from the real matter, her daughter's love for and conduct towards General Fitzroy, on which she had nothing to say, although several years later, when an avowal seemed again to be possible, the Queen chose to allude to the nine years' attachment with futile pretence at advice, and exhorted Amelia ". . . how necessary it is to *subdue* at once every Passion in the beginning and to consider the impropriety of indulging any impression which must make you miserable."

Amelia's physical torments, like her mental distresses, were almost ignored by her mother, who would scarcely allow a second physician to be consulted, lest the family practitioner should be offended. The Queen held her Birthday reception while the princess was on her death-bed, and Amelia herself pitifully exclaimed that she must die from the mis-treatment she received.[1] She expired on 2nd November 1810, a sacrifice, like Ireland, Pitt, and the governance and policy of England, to consideration for the wavering sanity of the King.

The paroxysm of frenzy which fell upon the bereaved father passed away for a time, but only to recur, and his mind was now so evidently grown childish that the Regency at last in 1811 became a necessity and a reality.

Charlotte did not find the Regency by any means so terrible as in earlier years it had threatened to be. She herself was in official control of the King's person and

[1] Letter of Mrs. Villiers quoted in "Romance of Princess Amelia," p. 193.

the royal Household, and for this she received a handsome additional income.

She placed Dr. John Willis, the old clergyman's son, in charge of the King and daily received his report, and over her husband's comfort and dignity she kept careful watch so long as she lived. A partially royal service still surrounded him whenever (as in 1816) he was markedly better, and she would herself sometimes visit him, going with Dr. Willis by a private stair. Any one else save his own servants she absolutely forbade to see him.

It was upon one of these visits that she found him singing a hymn to a harp, after which he knelt down and prayed aloud for the Queen, his children, and his people—finally beseeching God either to lighten his heavy burden or to give him strength to endure it—here he broke into sobs, and madness overshadowed him again.

With the Prince Regent Charlotte lived upon increasingly good terms, their last disagreement being in 1811, when, just as the Regency was being settled, she had written to him, as if in a forlorn hope of staving it off, that the King was recovering:—

> My dearest son, you will be I am sure highly gratified to hear that the King is considerably improved in health. He had an interview this morning with Mr. Perceval,[1] who was much satisfied with his whole appearance. He held a very reasonable conversation and inquired with great interest all that had been done, and expressed himself with kindness towards you, and said he was pleased with your conduct pending this business. I send my own servant that there may be no delay in your receiving this agreeable information.
>
> CHARLOTTE.
>
> [January 21, 1811.]

This "agreeable" suggestion of the King's recovery and his own relegation to insignificance the Prince chose

[1] Prime Minister 1810-12.

to discredit by pretending that it was not the Queen's true composition but dictated by "some one"—because no woman could have used such a phrase as "pending this business," and this ridicule, in turn, angered the Queen.

The storm soon passed, however, and when the Prince was actually Regent (1811) he treated his mother with perfect propriety, even with affection, and behaved kindly to his sisters, to each of whom had now been granted an establishment of £3,000 a year of her own. Elizabeth tells that staunch friend Lady Harcourt ("no common friend but really a Rock") that she in truth loves her brother almost more than anything in the world, and that his conduct "makes us feel how much we owe him —so delicate, so angelic, and so like himself."

The attitude of the princesses, who all detested the poor Princess of Wales and could see nothing in young Princess Charlotte but "a sad obstinate spirit," was quite in accordance with the Queen's condemnation of the Prince's wife and her severity to his daughter.

The grandmother agreed with the father that the bright young girl's high spirit required curbing by disgrace and restraint, and she had Princess Charlotte sent to her own grim charge, first at the Lower Lodge, then at Cranborne, both within the precincts of Windsor, where she was kept almost in solitude with little diversion but lessons.

To the Princess of Wales the Queen simply sent word that she would not receive her at the Drawing Rooms held in 1814, nor could she read anything in the Princess's replies to this grave insult but "folly—impudence and insolence."

The Queen, like all the great in that age of turmoil in unpoliced London, had to face occasional violence. She was once attacked in her own palace by a maniacal servant, and a good deal shaken by the sudden alarm.

Worse was the catastrophe which in 1810 befel the Duke of Cumberland, the most unpopular of all the brothers, who was set upon by his valet in the night and half murdered; happening as it did in the midst of apparent security this event gave Charlotte a dreadful shock, though, true to what had long since become her second nature, she appeared to be stoical enough.

"You love her too well not to feel she is often unjustly blamed," wrote Elizabeth to Lady Harcourt. "Believe me that, tho' she does not show her feelings to the world, this history of to-day has frightened her to a degree that is *not to be believed*, and she says she has a degree of horror upon her she never had before."

The danger with which she was threatened by an excited mob in 1815 she met with absolute calm. She was on her way to hold a state Drawing Room, the last she was to hold, and so ill guarded was her chair that the hissing, shouting crowd actually stopped it, hurling insults at the Queen and crying out to know what she had done with the Princess Charlotte, whom they fancied she had mewed up in some sort of prison.

The Queen let down the glass of her chair and haughtily replied to the men nearest her—"I am above seventy years of age, I have been more than fifty years Queen of England, and I never was hissed by a mob before"—and in deference to her dauntless spirit she was allowed to proceed, unmolested. She held the Drawing Room; and when she was about to return from St. James's to the Queen's House the Prince of Wales naturally despatched some gentlemen to see her safely home. For some reason, she resented this breach of ancient habit, and refused their conduct. "You have left Carlton House by his royal highness's orders," said she. "Return there by mine—or I will leave my chair and go home on foot."

The Queen's adherence to propriety, as she under-

stood it, and her absolute rigidity of rule grew no weaker with time, and came unexpectedly and unpleasantly into evidence over the Duke of Cumberland's marriage. The Duke, in 1813, selected a bride from the Mecklenburg-Strelitz family, the twice widowed Frederica, niece of the Queen. Charlotte at first expressed her approval, and wrote to her brother the Grand Duke of Strelitz, the bride's father, a letter of prudent, if somewhat forbidding, advice as to her future daughter-in-law's behaviour in this country, where, according to the Queen, the strictness of conduct expected was so much greater than on the Continent.

The letter at all events explains Charlotte's standard of proper manners. Frederica must never receive any morning visits from gentlemen, though she no doubt was used to them at home, while with regard to ladies great care would be necessary "as the Duke has acquaintance amongst our sex who, although not actually of bad conduct, might however become injurious to her in point of policy. I have found the advice of the dear King, 'of being uniformly polite to everyone, of doing nothing in the spirit of party, and of adhering closely to his family' has been my surest guidance during my long residence here." With this letter went the, truly, very "homely" present of six pounds of tea and two cheeses.

But immediately afterwards the Queen changed her mind. Her apologist supposes that "some one" reminded her how, a few years earlier, the Duke of Cambridge had wished to marry this charming cousin, and how the King had forbidden it for grave reasons of which the Queen only now became aware, he having been too tender of her affection for her own family to impart his private knowledge. But that Princess Frederica had been divorced from her second husband everybody,

[1] Watkins.

including Charlotte, must certainly have known. The King always forbade his children to marry, and it would surely have been difficult for him to acquire any news from Strelitz more intimate than Charlotte's. Anything about her sons' marriages, actual or projected, she was the last person to forget, and the sudden change in her attitude remains unexplained.

At any rate, she consulted the Regent, who did not agree with her, and she sent word to Cumberland, who was already at Strelitz, that she withdrew her consent and would never receive her niece at court. She was quite surprised to find that the Duke proceeded with the marriage nevertheless, and with considerable pomp; but when the couple reached England and celebrated a second English wedding at Carlton House with all the countenance the Regent could give them, the Queen and Princesses were conspicuously absent, nor did the Queen ever take any notice of her daughter-in-law.

In the public ceremonials of the Regency Charlotte could not often take much part, from her age and infirmities, but she came sufficiently often under the public eye to show that her inclination was to countenance the Prince whenever possible. During the splendid celebrations of the Peace of 1814, one critic informs us that her absence from the public rejoicings was marked and was generally disapproved; another, that it was considered scarcely decent in her to appear with all the magnificence of Queen while the poor mad King was in seclusion.

The absence of the Princess of Wales almost compelled her to appear, as the only possible female representative of royalty, nor does she seem to have been loath to do so. She held a Court, went to a state banquet at Carlton House, received the formal visit of the Tsar Alexander, and even showed herself at Ascot Races with the Regent in her carriage. At her own home of Frog-

more, also, she banqueted a hundred guests, and afterwards ordered that they should see Windsor—without in any way disturbing the insane King.

Mother and son, indeed, exhibited a perfectly correct picture when the Regent gave a grand fête in honour of the Duke of Wellington; the old Queen, led along on her son's arm, wizened and swarthy as she appeared—as dusky in countenance as a mulatto, said one uncourtly spectator—nevertheless in mien still gave the impression of regality. She even faced the fatigue of a visit in royal state to her son's Brighton palace.

She had quieter pleasures, too, at Frogmore: the farm and the garden, an amateur printing-press and bookbindery, where, under her librarian's care, she had some little works printed such as abridgements of history, made on cards and put up in boxes to give as presents to young people. She entertained here, with festivities arranged by Princess Elizabeth, and used to invite not only the nobility but the local gentry, "and even tradesmen and their families, and others in the middle sphere of society," and she gave refreshments to everybody. In London, of an evening, card parties were her usual recreation, and a miniature court gathered at her quiet receptions: that colossal egoist, the Marquis of Buckingham, Lord St. Helens (Fitzherbert, a friend of Addington's, and long a favourite with George and Charlotte), the Earls of Cardigan and Arran, Lords Henley and Walsingham, and Mr. Arthur Stanhope are particularly mentioned as her habitual courtiers. Her old friend Lord Harcourt had died in 1809.

She was not disturbed by the unpopularity into which she had gradually grown. At first it had been only a fashionable clique of political ladies who had scoffed at her: but, as time went on, her haughtiness to her husband's family and her neglect of society made the dislike more general. After the King's illness "the Prince of

Wales's Opposition," finding the sovereign popularly supported, had (as already observed) cast what blame they could manufacture upon the Queen, as the true cause of the King's coldness. Charlotte could hardly be termed a tender mother, and the imputation of hardness and selfishness thus first fixed upon her, came to be generally endorsed when her indifference towards Princess Amelia was suspected and her treatment of the Princess of Wales and the Princess Charlotte could be observed by the public. The dislike expressed for her rose from the belief that the old Queen was untrue to the soundest dictates of domestic duty—abetting the immoralities of her son, fomenting the quarrel between husband and wife, harsh to their innocent child. Her early fame as the model wife and mother was unknown to the new generation, and so, at the close of her career, she appears in a character almost the opposite of that ascribed to her at its beginning.

It was not surprising that the action of Princess Charlotte in breaking off her engagement to the Prince of Orange should be severely disapproved by her correct grandmother, who could hardly be expected to hold the modern preference for repentance at once rather than misery hereafter. She held it an improper, unroyal proceeding. She was present, however, at the wedding of Charlotte with Prince Leopold of Coburg in May 1816, and gave her blessing to the bride immediately after the ceremony. Not long afterwards, the Regent, now the legal head of the royal family, induced, it is said, by a judicious threat from William, Duke of Gloucester, signified his permission for the marriage of the Duke with Princess Mary. This wedding, too, took place in the Queen's presence.

There can be no doubt that the death of Princess Charlotte, in November 1817, was a great shock to the Queen, as to most of the royal family. Old and infirm,

and by no means a favourite with her granddaughter, Queen Charlotte really did nothing very surprising or improper in going to Bath at the time when the birth of the Princess's child was expected. Her absence, so bitterly resented by the people, in no way caused the grievous event. But it cannot be said that she or her daughters had taken any steps to ascertain that the young wife had about her a suitable attendance, she had kept aloof and unconcerned, as during the illness of Princess Amelia, and the furious indignation of the masses at the neglect which, as many believed, was directly responsible for the death of the darling of the nation cannot be said to have been wholly groundless.

The Queen was at dinner when the messenger reached Bath, and her secretary, General Taylor, was called from the room. He knew not how to break the tidings, but ventured back and signed to Lady Ilchester to come to him. This unheard-of breach of decorum prepared the whole party for some dreadful news, and, on Lady Ilchester's return, the expression of her countenance revealed the truth: Princess Elizabeth ran from the room, and the Queen, in speechless grief, covered her face and broke into convulsive sobs.

Her strong constitution held out against sorrow and disease for another year. Little importance as she may have attached to popular opinion, the manifestation of the hatred of London, which fell upon her on her return to town, was nevertheless terrifying. The mob, devoted to the Princess Charlotte and enthusiastic for the ill-used Princess of Wales, had conceived the horrible suspicion that the old Queen had in some way suborned the nurse or doctor, out of hatred to the Prince Regent's wife.

The Queen was to pass through the City, and had sent a message to the authorities that she wished to be received *without ceremony*. This they chose to interpret into tak-

ing no notice whatever of her coming. A dense mob surrounded her coach, and had not the High Constable of Westminster, who escorted her through his own district, been sensible enough to ride on beside her carriage to the Mansion House, Charlotte might have been even assaulted by the furious people. Horrible yells and threats were raised; some thrust their heads into the carriage, savagely asking what she had done with the Princess Charlotte? while others wrestled to disarm her footmen.

The Queen was dreadfully shaken, and in the evening was seized with a painful spasm. For the rest of the year it was manifest to all but herself that she was slowly sinking, and Princess Elizabeth, who in April of this year had wedded the sensible if unattractive Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Homburg, could hardly make up her mind to leave her mother, but lingered with her till July, when the Prince was obliged to return to Hesse.

The old Queen, the mother of so many children, seemed to be confronted with the imminent extinction of her house. The father had prevented almost all of his children from marrying and now they had reached middle life. The Duke of York had no children. Cumberland was hated. George III's brothers, save the Duke of Gloucester, had been childless; and Prince William's late union with Princess Mary brought no offspring, so that Parliament, alarmed by the prospect of a possible foreign succession (one of the young dukes of Brunswick might become the future sovereign), requested the Dukes of Clarence, Sussex, Kent, and Cambridge to marry, and offered them sufficient incomes for the purpose. Sussex refused to marry another wife while Lady d'Armeland was living; but the other three quickly found brides, and Charlotte was able to witness the English ceremony performed for the Duke of Cambridge and Augusta of Hesse-Cassel in May, and to welcome Clar-

ence with Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, and Kent with Victoria of Saxe-Coburg, the widowed Princess Leiningen, in July.

The sons conducted their wives back to Germany, and Sussex, too, was abroad, when the Queen at last realized that the end was approaching, and asked to be taken to Windsor, to be near the King. But she was already too ill to be moved from Kew, though she clung to the hope of rallying enough to bear the journey.

Not until the day before her death would she make her will, which was exceedingly business-like, and bequeathed almost all she had to leave to her daughters. There was but little money, and she expressed a doubt whether Augusta would be able to maintain Frogmore. To the Queen of Würtemberg she gave nothing, considering her well provided for already. But the finest of her jewels she bequeathed to the Crown of Hanover, whether as suspecting a possible female succession or a revolution in England, it is impossible to guess. There were no legacies of sentiment, and even the little collections of Frogmore were all in the end sold, under her will, and the Queen of Würtemberg had to purchase such little mementoes of her mother as she wished to have. The public felt shocked, but not the daughters, who knew their unsentimental mother too well to reck much of such trifles.

The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, the Princesses Augusta, Sophia, Mary, and Sophia of Gloucester, were all constantly with the old Queen during her last days, and to pretend, as did the "Times," that the aged sovereign was neglected at the last by her children, was a baseless calumny, of a piece with that paper's grave censure of the dead Queen, because, despite her own "sober dignity," the wasteful, tasteless extravagance of the Regent had been "countenanced or apparently not discountenanced by the Queen," an accusation scarcely

compatible with the "avarice" the journalists liked to attribute to her.

She passed away calmly, not long after signing her will, propped up in her chair, her two eldest sons and two daughters beside her. She had borne her painful illness with that steadfast endurance which had been hers through life, and "never once suffered a murmur of complaint to escape her."

CHAPTER VIII

CHARLOTTE AND SOCIETY—FASHIONS—MORALS

ON turning to contemplate the more public life of Queen Charlotte, the first striking consideration is that during her very long life as Queen Consort she did not exercise by any means that influence upon opinion or manners which might naturally have been looked for. Probably she did not begin to exercise any kind of influence until after George III had broken down, but in her later life, partly from the very fact of having been Queen Consort for so long, it was inevitable that her, so to speak, tacit influence should count for something.

From one sphere peculiarly that of the Queen Charlotte almost absolutely withdrew. Not so much from innate incapacity or distaste as from the compulsion of her domestic life—as already explained—she never made herself and her court in any way the centre of society and fashion.

This can only be deplored, as deepening indefinitely that cleavage between the sovereign and the leaders of the active world which had been widening ever since the downfall of James II. From the death of Mary II the line of foreign sovereigns had been interrupted only by a dull, elderly queen, with a foreign husband, and the divergence, in tastes and manners, of society from the court had grown more marked with each generation. The non-English habits and the domesticity of the first two Hanoverian kings must, in any case, have formed a bar-

rier to sympathy, but when, in addition, the astuteness of the great Whig families secured to themselves the monopoly of all the ornamental posts about the monarch and the last forlorn hope of the Stuarts branded the Tory party with unsuccessful disloyalty, it became practically impossible for the Tory members of the Opposition party to appear at court.

In the reign of George III, when more intricate party distinctions began to be recognized, the system remained the same; the King himself adopted it, and by the time he had been on the throne some eight or nine years his habit of identifying particular parties with the powers of light and darkness had brought about a well-understood winnowing of those entitled to appear at court and attend the Queen's Drawing Rooms.

To begin with, the Opposition, whether of the old Whigs or their heirs, "the Prince of Wales's Opposition," stayed away altogether; of the "King's Friends" —the title was openly used by the King and themselves —some were not of sufficient social standing to warrant the introduction of their women-folk to her Majesty, while others were of too bad character. There remained a section of the ministerial and royal party, and a few nobles who meddled little with politics.

During the twelve years' ministry of North (1770-82) the same set of dull faces had appeared regularly. It was actually not until the November of 1778 (when North was begging the King to let him resign and Fox's party expected to come into office) that such great personages as the Duchesses of Devonshire, Grafton, and Gordon had thought it worth while to be presented to their Queen. Though no change occurred at once, the expectation of change, as well as the introduction of the Prince of Wales to the public, made their Majesties' courts much frequented during the winter of 1780-1; but it was apparently not to the Queen's taste, for to the balls which

she gave for her son she did not invite most of the great ladies, and they showed their resentment by all staying away from her Birthday Drawing Room, which was attended only by those whose posts obliged them to be present.[1]

When at length North, in 1782, collapsed, and Fox's party for a few months held office, the political revolution was reflected at the Drawing Rooms. "A new company, comprehending all the young and splendid part of the nobility," rendered the King's Birthday Court in the June of 1782 more magnificent than it had been for many years. The unwonted names of Richmond, Rockingham, and Grafton, of Camden, Ashburton, and Shelburne, of Cavendishes, Foxes, Keppels, Conways, were announced, and in the same sentence we are told by the staid reporter that in this there was "a novelty which gave it a peculiar charm; not a face was to be seen in the circle which had been seen there before." It would be difficult to imply more distinctly that the King and Queen never saw the *élite* of London, but whether they felt the "peculiar charm," save as a malign one, may be doubted.

Either dazzled by so much brilliance, or fearing that the Prince of Wales (who was wearing on this occasion the celebrated *tamboured* waistcoat worked by his mother) might be overwhelmed by attentions, their Majesties issued unusually stringent regulations for obtaining tickets for the court ball, so that this grand function proved, after all, to be less crowded than had been expected and the new courtiers were rebuffed.

Of the recognized threefold division of possible courtiers, the King's ministers, the Opposition, and the non-political noblemen, there is no question which Charlotte preferred. Ministers and King's Friends, whether men

[1] H. W., 2262 (xii).

of the stamp of Sandwich, Weymouth, Germaine, and their crew of dissolute retainers, or belonging to Pitt's respectable hard-workers, like Abbot, Rose, or Eden, were not men with whom she and the princesses could talk: the King knew them, not the Queen: they belonged to the public, not to the private life. The clever men of the Opposition, Fox and Fitzpatrick, Burke and Sheridan, were of course mere enemies, potential traitors who had seduced the Prince of Wales, tried to depose the King, and sought to plunge England into a Jacobin revolution; they were scarcely to be mentioned but with bated breath.

Charlotte wrote of the respectable Lord Burlington[1] that it was indeed "a pity where so much real good unites in Private, that in public it should be the contrary. We know it is so; but as I have nothing to do with Public Business it is but justice to them to Admire the one and regret the other."

Those whom the Queen admitted to any kind of intimacy belonged almost without exception to the non-political group—the Harcourts, Holdernesses, Ancasters, Aylesburys, Effinghams, Waldegraves, for though they might vote for the King in the House, and so be classed with the King's Friends, they took scarcely any part in the actual business—or intrigue—of politics. That Lady Weymouth was long in her Majesty's family did not give her husband any footing there.

Those whom Charlotte liked remained for a long while in her service. Their rank might be high, but that did not make them leaders of society. Indeed, surprise had been expressed at the selection of dull Lord and Lady Holdernesse for office, until it was discovered that the worthy chaplain, Mr. Smelt, and a valued French governess, once in Lady Holdernesse's service, had

[1] So named in Harcourt Papers (vol. vi.), but created Earl 1831.

"recommended" them.[1] The name of the Duchess of Northumberland, blunt and bluff, had, earlier, caused a raising of eyebrows, but "Quite right!" said caustic Lady Townshend; "The Queen knows no English, Lady Northumberland will teach her the vulgar tongue."

The Queen always had a complete Household, of course: a Mistress of the Robes, six Ladies of the Bedchamber, five Women of the Bedchamber and six Maids of Honour drew salaries of £500 or £300 a year, and there were Chamberlain, Treasurer, Secretary, Master of the Horse, Vice-Chamberlain, besides Equerries and Ushers; yet only a few of these became her servants in anything but name. Most were kept at a distance, and their duties minimized to formalities. They took it in turns to be present at Drawing Rooms, or attended at a wedding or a state visit. In the journals and letters of the time the maids of honour are hardly ever mentioned, of the other ladies only one was at court as a rule. Miss Burney mentions the apartment, at Kew, "of the Lady-in-waiting, *when she is here.*"

After 1788 Charlotte named Lady Courtown, who, as well as her at least equally correct and insipid husband, was a favourite, to be her lady "for the country," which helped to exclude for some months those whose proper turn of duty it was.

Doubtless this solitude was caused originally by the King's dislike to having his family circle disturbed, or in fact, to any company which might constrain him to observe the forms of politeness; but in the end it became a principle with Charlotte, whose combined shyness and haughtiness made her resentful of independence in thought and speech. Her treatment of the Duchess of Argyll has been already mentioned. She disliked the famous beauty, says Horace Walpole, really because the

[1] Horace Walpole's malicious explanation.

King showed a sort of liking for her. As rudeness did not produce the Duchess's resignation Charlotte changed her manner and apparently tried to cultivate a friendlier feeling. But when the Duchess still continued to talk familiarly to his Majesty—who certainly did not object to her easy manners—the Queen administered the snub direct; she requested Lady Egremont to attend her, out of turn, in the stead of the Duchess, and this temporary supersession reduced the great lady, first to anger, which gave the Queen opportunity for desiring her to "think it over" coolly, and then to submission.

Much the same happened when the Countess of Pembroke was seen to be the King's next favourite. His favouritism was certainly of the mildest type, he chattered, made jokes of an elementary nature, stared, and showed his admiration when the lady made a pretty speech. Possibly there may really have been some further danger lurking, for the Duke of Gloucester averred that the Prince and the Duke had a horrible scheme of encouraging their father's fancy, and *ruling the King through Lady Pembroke*. In any case, it was made clear that the Queen's ladies must remember always to be formal to the King, however familiar he might choose to be to them, and Charlotte procured the intervention of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who rebuked Lady Pembroke with such effect that when, after the King's illness, she ventured again into the thorny circle of the royal family, "she behaved so well that it became mere friendship."

As years went on the public receptions held by the Queen became steadily fewer and stiffer. Queen Caroline, and even George II, had really conversed with those who came, as hosts with guests. After Caroline's death the *levée* of George II was not inaptly described as the lion's den, but it had been expected that the two young sovereigns would render these gatherings more cheerful.

George III had at first taken rather too much pains to be affable, as though he hardly felt sure of himself, and then, as always, his aimless restlessness, and rapid, disjointed, trivial talk wearied his courtiers infinitely. Perhaps they felt there was some compensation when the King and Queen began to treat the Drawing Room as a formal ceremonial.

After the first year or two the custom came to be for the whole assembly to be drawn up in two, three, or sometimes six rows on either side of the ante-room; up the wide passage between them advanced the King slowly, noting the faces, but addressing no word to any one. Behind him, still more slowly, came the Queen, led by her Lord Chamberlain, and followed by a few of her ladies, and she would occasionally pause to speak for a minute or two to any peeress she personally knew. When the princesses were old enough to appear the elder ones used to follow the Queen, each led by an officer of the Household and attended by a lady-in-waiting. On reaching the drawing-room their Majesties stood still, and the company filed very slowly before them, each receiving a word of greeting, and passed out at another door. As the King and Queen always stood very close to the entrance the throng was often unpleasantly dense, and no conversation was possible.

Upon the two royal birthdays it was the custom to hold an elaborate Court, followed by a ball, and this was the occasion for "bringing out" débutantes. When a young lady had performed a minuet in this trying publicity, she was "out," and it is stated that the balls given by the Lady Mayoress served the same purpose among the well-to-do middle class.

There was considerable formality in these stately balls. The King and Queen used to appear about 9.30, and then the minuets began. Each gentleman should perform two, and might take a different partner for each.

The Prince of Wales usually danced with two of his sisters. After the minuets came less elaborate "country" dances. Royalty would quietly withdraw rather early, perhaps in the middle of some dance, which was not interrupted, and the whole concluded about half an hour after midnight, without any refreshments.

It was still the rule that, on royal birthdays, including those of all the princes and princesses, new clothes should be worn by the members of the Household, but a formal "keeping" of their birthdays was rare. Critics said, because the King and Queen feared the expense.

Lady Holdernesse had some useful hints to give to Lady Harcourt when the latter was about to become a lady-in-waiting. She wrote (in July 1784):

> In regard of the Prince's or Princess's birthdays being kept there has been so many changes that it is impossible to gess what will be done this year, but no waiting is taken by us [*i.e.* the Queen's ladies] only your Ladyship should be prepared to have a new sach in readiness in case you was sent for, as those things happen with very short notice. I don't know what was donne last year about the Prince of Walles's Birthday as I was absent. Princess Royal's certainly will be kept and I have no doubt but your Ladyship will be there and most likely Lodge at the Queen's House, which will be a very good opportunity to make a visit to Mrs. Schuellenberg and Hagadom; the first I saw a great deal of while I was at Montpellar. I always made it a rule since I have belonged to the Queen to call upon them now and then, and realy your Ladyship will find them very civil good kind of People.

Whether it were her own doing or no, Charlotte's neglect of society was a grave mistake. The great ladies were disposed to show their resentment, and opposition politics gained a great support. While they had still hoped that she would take her natural place as Queen, they had refrained from mingling politics and fashion,

and she might, had she ventured, have gathered a splendid circle round her.

A trifling example may serve to show the change of feeling. Three or four years after Charlotte's coronation the Spitalfields weavers, still prolonging their unsuccessful struggle for a lost monopoly, directed a personal appeal to her. In the hope of helping them, she gave up wearing French materials, and asked the ladies of her court to agree with her in wearing only gowns of English manufacture. A minority grumbled, more applauded, but all did as she wished, and appeared at the Birthday Court, held in February 1766, in the painted silks produced at Spitalfields.

Some fifteen years later her Majesty's preferences in dress were a theme for mockery. Hoops spread out and plumes shot up without any deference to her expressed desires. It was known that she detested high feathers, yet everybody went to the drawing-rooms in the tallest they could get. The Duchess of Devonshire wore one an ell high, and had to stoop low to get in at the doorway. Charlotte took a little malicious pleasure in describing how a certain Mrs. Goldburn was "quite Formidable by Three immense Feathers, which so directly run into my Eyes when she was presented, I was under the necessity of drawing myself back in order to avoid Mischef, and I rejoiced a little in lady Claremont's distress who presented her."

Charlotte merely followed the fashions of dress, though as moderately as she could; she wore a Dunstable straw bonnet in 1784, and an Oldenburgh bonnet in 1814; her turbans were smaller, her plumes lower, her hoops narrower than those of other great ladies; she patronized the artificial flowers, whose manufacture provided such a nice occupation for young women, or tambour, or steel embroidery, when these fashions came in, but she did not lead.

It has to be remembered that in temperament and by education Charlotte was alien from the lively English world. She became completely mistress of the English tongue, which Caroline had never been, but however possessed by the loftiest self-consciousness of royalty, she remained at heart the German provincial, which Caroline had never been.

Taste, in the fashionable class of England, as of France or Italy, had become in the latter part of the eighteenth century flamboyant and even to some extent megalomaniac. Perhaps it was unavoidable in the era which opened with the secession of the New England from the old, beheld the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, and closed with Waterloo. Everything tended to the grandiose and melodramatic. The nobility were lavishing vast fortunes, drawn from the public purse, upon palaces which their descendants never could afford to live in. Their grounds bristled with miniature temples and mock Gothic ruins. Statuary and ornament were rococo; the theatrical Fuseli was the favourite art critic and illustrator of the day; one of its most skilful artists, Gillray, was content to caricature; its pattern antiquarian and dilettante was the rapacious, destructive Horace Walpole. Burke and Byron are indeed great names, but the larger quantity of Burke's output, the shrieking declamations which half terrified his contemporaries, is practically buried. Mrs. Radcliffe's school was more numerous than Fanny Burney's, and Fanny Burney sadly degenerated before the end. Only upon the actual stage, it seems, were proportion and dignity to be found.

In morals the same symptoms appear. Egoism and extravagance became, among the high-born and wealthy, colossal. Gambling, like bribery, reached limits hitherto unheard-of; drunkenness and immorality were not merely rife, but shameless and self-assertive. No doubt immorality had long been fashionable, but in England as

in France, a certain polish of manners had, in the earlier part of the century, usually prevented it from assuming the flaunting publicity of the later period. The standard of manners had required the preservation of outward dignity. Tolerance had been extended almost equally to man and woman. There was at least no cant, no pretence of requiring on one side a virtue discarded by the other, while to make a scandal and to proclaim shame was discreditable. And though a man might sometimes at the last marry his mistress, mistresses were usually kept in a kind of formal obscurity.

But in the days of George III, the Duke of Grafton publicly ushered the notorious Nancy Parsons into his opera box before the face of the Queen herself; Lord Pembroke eloped from the royal palace with a young girl, and after a few months coolly returned to his wife and to court as if nothing had occurred; the paramours of the Prince of Wales or Charles Fox were leaders of society; blasphemy and ribaldry were listened to in the House of Lords—and with the fiercer licence came a cynical disregard of dignity or consistency.

Thus the shameless Sandwich impeached his partner Wilkes: Lord Grosvenor proclaimed his own and his wife's shame, and was paid £10,000 "compensation." Divorce cases multiplied; peer after peer, by-words for profligacy, accused and divorced much-tried and sorely-tempted wives, until the climax was reached in the flagrant scandal of George IV's attempt to divorce Queen Caroline II.

In such a world, what place could Charlotte occupy?

The Queen must of necessity adopt some principle of action with regard to the question of personal morals; but it cannot be said that she was very successful. The conduct of both King and Queen laid them open to an often-repeated charge of hypocrisy.

Every one knew that their majesties themselves were

models of domestic virtue, almost every one could see that their treatment of others was inconsistent with any practical respect for virtue.

That George III not only kept Sandwich, Weymouth, and Germain (Sackville) in his favourite ministry, but showered favours upon the two latter; that in his Household Talbot, Pembroke, and Dashwood (three notoriously evil livers) were Steward, Chamberlain, and Treasurer, that Miss Chudleigh was prominent among the Queen's Maids of Honour, and Lord March among the King's Gentlemen, that the Queen did not succeed in protecting her own Maids of Honour from her own son—these, and similar facts, were extremely puzzling in the light of her Majesty's professed severity.

The Queen's rule was not to receive any lady with a blemished reputation, and the test of blemish was the husband's verdict. Miss Chudleigh, therefore, retained her post, though all London and the court knew her for years as the Duke of Kingston's mistress, and, when he finally married her, she was received as duchess although the royal family were well aware of her bigamy. So, too, was Mrs. Hastings received, and even favoured, although appearances were considerably against her. But Lady Derby, turned from home by her rake of a husband (the lover of Miss Farren) so soon as the Duke of Dorset had compromised her, was forbidden to appear. She was the daughter of that Duchess of Argyll against whom the Queen treasured her little grudge. The "infinitely indiscreet" "Margravine of Anspach" (Lady Craven) was at first, and for some years, ignored with complete severity. But in the end the heirs of the dead Lord Craven—himself an openly dissolute man—countenanced her and sanctioned by their presence the Queen's condescending reception. Either the Margravine was gravely injured by the Queen, or she should not have been received at all.

Worst of all, Mrs. Fitzherbert, united by a mock marriage with the Prince of Wales, as well as the notorious Lady Jersey, received Charlotte's countenance, the latter indeed became her favourite at the very time of the Prince's marriage with the unhappy Caroline of Brunswick.

It is said that the Queen's graciousness was once appealed to by the aunt of a young lady who had incurred blame, in the hope that royal countenance might enable her to live down the imputation of indiscretion. Charlotte refused. "Tell her that you *dared not* ask such a thing of the Queen," she said. Yet Lady Jersey was asked to the royal parties, and placed beside the princesses, and Mrs. Fitzherbert the royal family always considered as the Prince's "true wife."

There is no denying that Charlotte's standard was technical, and that her conduct suited her own convenience. In the first place, there was to be a definite standard for women. If their husbands tolerated even the most flagrant ill-conduct in them, the Queen would look no closer. If their husbands condemned them, the condemnation was final. In the second place, there was a different standard for men and women. The man was not injured by his reputation: a Duke of Dorset, a Lord William Gordon, could be a technically acceptable husband: the Queen had nothing to say about men. In the third place, royalty ennobled what it touched: the mistresses of royal persons were, by inference, half-royal, lifted to a sphere perhaps above that of regular morals. This was the well-understood rule of German courts, but from a pair of sovereigns so virtuous as George and Charlotte, so severe as was the one towards thieves and forgers, and so severe as was the other towards every kind of misdemeanour in her own sex, so nice in the minutiae of propriety, so inquisitive as to a call paid at a house where there were gentlemen in the family, the adoption

of that continental laxity came with a grotesqueness which cannot rebut the contemporary accusation of hypocrisy.

If Charlotte be charged with hypocrisy, it will be nevertheless allowed that she quite believed in her own standard, and as this is generally held to excuse any conduct, perhaps hers may be condoned. Her abhorrence of vice in the abstract was no doubt as sincere as that of everybody else. Miss Burney describes her distress over a certain "Lady C.,"[1] unhappy and frail, whom the Queen had always known and was interested in. She had taken pains, she said, to show her particular and "useful" regard. She therefore received a severe shock of disappointment by her fall. "She spoke of the whole transaction, gave me her character, her story, her situation—all at large; and at last, in speaking of her utter ruin and all its horrors, the tears ran down her face, and she held her handkerchief to her eyes some time before she could dry them."

Miss Burney was deeply moved to witness such a touching sorrow "in a mind so rigidly a stranger to every frail sensation that could lead to a similar guilt." Yet the Queen must have heard of the brutalities and temptations which fashionable husbands seem to have been rather prone to offer just then.

There is, in a sort, a horrible kind of consistency in Charlotte's encouragement of Lady Jersey and her cruel harshness to the Princess of Wales. If the Prince must, *prima facie*, be treated as blameless, if Lord Jersey did not find fault, the only person left to blame was the wife who had the arrogance to demand a little tolerance for herself as well as so much for her husband. The attitude which Charlotte contrived to take towards the Jerseys may be gathered from a letter she wrote to Lady Harcourt when the Earl died in 1803. "The poor deceased," she

[1] Possibly Lady Carmarthen.

says, "was never bad in himself but weak and indulging to a little bewitching Wife, which made him appear to some wanting in Sense and to others unfeeling." It would have been better for many others, she adds, if he had shown more spirit, "at least it appears so, but in Domestic affairs none but those who belong to them can form a true Judgement." Considering that Lord Jersey held a number of lucrative posts through his wife's influence, the Queen may perhaps be at least termed prudish in assuming so purely domestic a point of view.

There was more than a little prudishness in Queen Charlotte; perhaps it was a necessary product of virtue based on etiquette. She loved to tag a moral, and did not look very deep to find one, and she had a beautifully modest estimate of her own sex, which at all events made it easy to be deferential to the other.

"To reflect a little," she writes to Lord Harcourt in 1800, "never will do harm to anybody and is without doubt most Beneficial to our Sex. For as our Minds are easier led away by Fashion, amusements and trifles, so do we require more time to recollect or reflect."

The apparent complacency of the Queen's attitude and sentiments occasionally stirred indignation among a few persons acquainted with certain dismal entanglements about which little was surmised and less revealed outside the secluded home of her Majesty and the princesses: "It really makes me boil with rage," wrote Mrs. Villiers,[1] in April, 1809, apropos of the unfeeling treatment inflicted on poor Princess Amelia: "and then one hears of the King and Queen being patterns of conjugal fidelity and parental affection. I am sure the Queen never had one grain of the latter quality in her composition—the former I daresay she *may* boast of for I don't believe

[1] Hon. Mrs. George Villiers to her brother, Lord Boringdon, in "The Romance of Princess Amelia," p. 193.

there is one person in the Kingdom would have had bad taste enough to propose to her to be otherwise."

Charlotte was so successful in preserving appearances through every catastrophe that the broad aspersions of a few scandalous publications (*e.g.*, upon Princess Elizabeth) were generally ignored. Of the few who, from necessity or accident, became aware of damaging facts the better-natured had no desire to publish scandals, while the less trustworthy were sufficiently recompensed for silence to ensure their observing it. But the gloom of family jars and distresses naturally overshadowed the Queen's spirits, and the publicity of the quarrel between the Prince and Princess of Wales, the blame for which she placed wholly to the account of the latter, was above all things hateful to her. At one of the most trying periods of family disagreement, a period also of public anxiety and much distress among private families,[1] she wrote with unusual frankness to Lady Harcourt (23rd May, 1796):—"How many unpleasant things have passed since we saw one another. To know them and not to have the power of soothing and assisting the sufferer is real Martyrdom. I hear all sides and know so many things which must not be revealed that I am most truely wore down with it; and my dislike to the World in general gets quite the better of me; for those who know one and those who do not, all take *à tort & à travers* and say indeed most cutting things. Our ball looked Gay, whether it was truely so I do not ask; My feelings were far otherways, but we did go through with it tolerably well, and the best part of the Day was the end of it. We were all equally happy when it was over. As I mean this for you alone, I may venture to say this much upon the subject of a relation of yours [*i.e.*, Mrs. Harcourt] that it will be prudent for you to continue silent

[1] Charlotte knew several families who suffered severely in the Irish troubles of 1795-6.

with her upon Carlton House; I have my particular reasons, believe me; it is not for the sake of doing mischief that I say so, but I have reasons to suspect that what we won't spread ourselves others are employed to do; I name no Names, when we see one another I shall explain it . . ."

Considering that "The Carlton House System," as well as the behaviour of the Prince to the King, was matter of public jest and satire, Charlotte's readiness to suspect Mrs. Harcourt's loyalty seems unnecessary, to say the least, and Mrs. Harcourt, who speedily became aware of it, wrote indignantly to her sister-in-law that it was hard indeed to be accused of giving "bad advice" to the Princess of Wales when she had gone to Brunswick against her own desire purely to enable their Majesties to get out of a difficulty in the matter, and had not only given the most correct admonitions as to humility, but had avoided seeing the Princess ever since, for safety's sake.

CHAPTER IX

ECONOMY AND UNPOPULARITY

THE accusation most commonly brought against Charlotte, and repeated in every form of lampoon until it was almost universally accepted, was that of avarice, and there was but too much apparent justification for the charge in the poverty-stricken appearance which the royal household often wore, and in various paltry economies for which no good reason could be alleged.

The dowager Princess of Wales had from the first encouraged her son's shy and rather selfish love of privacy, and in early years Charlotte probably did not feel herself in a position to remonstrate. "The court," wrote Horace Walpole in 1764, "independent of politics makes a strange figure. The recluse life led here at Richmond, which is carried to such an excess of privacy and economy that the Queen's *friseur* waits on them at dinner and that 4 lbs. only of beef are allowed for their soup, disgusts all sorts of people. The Drawing-rooms are abandoned. Lady Buckingham was the only woman there on Sunday se'ennight."

It was soon observed that their Majesties avoided entertaining, asked only very small companies and provided very meagrely. They did not encourage even the usual complimentary visits of the nobility, it was supposed because they found the customary presents and *vails* burdensome. Their country life and avoidance of court entertainments, deprived the London tradesmen

of a large custom to which they felt themselves entitled, while in the country itself discontent was provoked by the King's attempts to farm for profit, and the system adopted of bringing most of the necessary stores from London.

When the King and Queen made their home at Kew the beautiful and valuable gardens there had already become famous. Under the new *régime* they were spoiled for lack of a little expenditure, and the heart of the head-gardener was almost broken by the royal decision to let the orange trees, the pride of the gardens, die rather than spend any money on heightening the glass-houses.

Doubtless it was partly adherence to custom which prevented George III from allowing himself or his family to have a guard, even in the years of fiercest riots. But it looked ill that the King should be so slenderly attended that when he came to town for levées or other business the crowd could press close up to him. Several times a howling mob thrust itself into the very court-yard of St. James's without hindrance.

Once, early in the reign, a woman of the lower class quietly walked into the palace, went upstairs, opened a door, and stepped into the boudoir where the Queen was sitting with the Duchess of Ancaster, and there she stood for some minutes composedly staring about her before the startled Duchess found presence of mind enough to ring the bell and have her led away.

The French visitor Grosley relates that he, too, one day strolled unhindered into the palace, only meeting one footman, of whom he asked: "Whether the King was living there—'He is there in the next room,' replied the man drily, and passed on without troubling himself about me. I slipped quietly downstairs again, and outside was asked by the guard for money to get brandy with."

Perhaps the worst appearance was made by the royal

household after the year 1782, when Burke's bill for greater economy forced the King to his last resources. The cry for a reform in expenditure had for its main object the curtailment of the funds which George III spent for secret political purposes. But the Whigs reckoned without the dogged tenacity of the King; he cut down not his political, but his personal expenditure, and this to a degree which roused considerable indignation against those who drove their monarch to apparent penury while themselves clinging to pensions and sinecures for which their fathers' or grandfathers' names alone afforded an excuse.

It was at this moment that Charlotte seized the opportunity of a complaint addressed to her by the pages to promulgate a yet more economical system in the household. The pages, half of them Germans and as particular about their rank and standing as the Queen could be about her own, had been grievously insulted by the Prince of Wales who, having taken a fancy to the wife of a stablegroom, had the husband brought into his house in the nominal capacity of a valet, and sent him to dine with the royal pages. These gentlemen attempted to mutiny; they all requested permission to retire from court and asked to be given some small place in the East Indies, or else a pension wherewith to return to Germany. Their Majesties coldly refused, and Charlotte's confidential servant, Albert, ventured to remonstrate with her. She was very sorry, she said, but "as the King had not expressed his disapprobation to her," she could not interfere, whether with the Prince, the groom, or the woman. And she added, skilfully turning from the point at issue, that now the royal family must themselves suffer economies; it would be necessary to make changes in the Household "which she feared those who had hitherto in every way been considered and had lived like gentlemen would feel also" (that *like gentlemen* must have rankled in Mr. Albert's

mind). In future their Majesties would take into their service, she added, persons of a lower class, persons who could be employed more generally, and instead of keeping, as hitherto, to the families they were used to employ they would introduce strangers who would expect less, and thus *good would be more generally distributed*:[1] it was an odd conclusion, and the dark hint of Albert's daughter that the *disorders* in the royal family were, at least in part, due to the lower status and tone of those who now perforce became the habitual companions of royalty is probably not without its truth.

These economies in the royal home coincided with the period of the King's deepest unpopularity. It is often maintained that George III and his people were at one on the question of America, and that the sovereign's ignorance and obstinacy represented the general tone of the nation, but this view is hardly borne out by contemporary notices. The King had long been disliked in London, where his political struggle with the Whigs, that is, with the major part of the nobility and wealthy gentry, had set society against him at the very time of his battle with Wilkes, which had roused the ire both of the independent citizens and of the mob. Seldom surely can an English king have seen the aristocracy, the gentry, the City of London, and the lowest classes all agreed in hating him; moreover the long duration of the American war added to the ranks of George III's enemies the manufacturing, trading, and shipping interests all over the kingdom. The people were full of discontent everywhere (recorded Wesley in 1775): "They heartily despise the King and hate him with a perfect hatred."[2]

Charlotte was concerned by her husband's deep unpopularity, and after the Wilkes riots felt it desirable to

[1] Mrs. Papendiek.

[2] Quoted in G. O. Trevelyan's "The American Revolution," Part II, vol. i, p. 8.

try to conciliate goodwill, if possible, by the presence of the young heir to the throne. She gave a ball for the little Prince of Wales and fancied that in his name more popular demonstrations might be courted. Lest she should succeed, Alderman Beckford gave a banquet to Wilkes at the same time, and stirred up the mob to so furious a riot that Charlotte, at the close of her own entertainment, was terrified by the sight of a great hearse, surrounded by flaming torches, being dragged into the court-yard of St. James's as a hint to the King: a butcher waving a great axe sat on the top and a yelling mob surged round.

There was no making any political capital out of the Queen as yet, but she was so inseparable from the King that it seemed obvious that one mind moved them both. She was accordingly saddled with a large share of the blame for the domestic failings of the court. Her economies, real or imaginary, her partiality to sausages (taken to be peculiarly frugal fare), the schoolroom diet of her children, the supposed itching palm of "the place-broker, old Schwellenberg and Co.," were all made bitter fun of by the satirical laureate of the day, "Peter Pindar." Every incident of court life was perfectly well known through the gossip of the servants and their families; the royal method of boarding out as many as possible of the attendants, upper or lower, in lodgings sometimes at a distance, naturally lent itself to the spread of chatter, and no incident was too paltry for a lampoon. The King cheapening hay and bargaining for pigs with more craft than honesty; the Schwellenberg in broken English officiously tale-bearing, and interpreting royal orders into domestic tyranny; the Queen getting the best of music and drama for nothing, and keeping her children on short commons—these bade fair to become the stock conceptions of majesty.

The actual incidents out of which the cheap rhymesters

made such ludicrous pictures were usually, perhaps always, true. The King and Queen did go into the poor folks' cottages sometimes. The King really did set up a mill at Windsor to grind corn cheaply for the peasantry when the difficulties of the great war and the consequent speculations of middlemen placed flour almost out of their reach. He was fiercely derided for *selling* it at all; why did he not *give*? cried the satirists, Farmer George being, at least in this case, much better aware where the agricultural shoe pinched than the town wits.[1] Probably in many other cases the scandal-mongers were not acquainted with more than a part of the story:

> To Windsor oft and eke to Kew
> The royal mandate Mara drew,
> No cheering drop the Dame was ask'd to sip,
> No bread was offer'd to her trembling lip;
> Tho' faint she was not suffered to sit down;
> Such was the *goodness—grandeur* of the Crown!
> * * * * * * *
> Poor Mistress Siddons, *she* was ordered out,
> To wait too upon Majesty, to spout, etc.
> (a similar picture).

No excuse can be made for the hardships which Charlotte's cast-iron etiquette and want of humane consideration too often inflicted upon her unlucky courtiers. Greater sovereigns than George III have been notorious for perpetually keeping on their feet and wearing out their less robust attendants, and Charlotte, who could be extremely considerate to her own immediate servants, appeared to think a rigid severity necessary for the preservation of her dignity with all others. But the charge of a miserly treatment of the dramatic and musical artists whom she ordered to perform at court, though it has a good deal of corroboration, breaks down at the only point where we

[1] There are to this day districts in Berks and Oxfordshire where a main dread of the peasantry is lest the little local mills should cease to grind.

have certain evidence. Though no fee was paid to Mrs. Siddons for some lessons which she was required to give to the princesses, we find that she did not herself think her services ill rewarded by the gift of a handsome jewel and the Queen's nomination of her son to the Charterhouse. Possibly the Mara episode might prove less mean than it looks if Madame Mara's own evidence were forthcoming. On one occasion, at least, when a band of musicians came to the palace, and were offended by being treated like common conjurers, and inconvenienced by lack of proper refreshment, these insults turned out to be due to the stupidity of the lower servants; or, in other words, to the inefficiency of the palace stewards, whose work and appointment the King and Queen could seldom get supervised without a personal letter to some great nobleman.

The popularity of "Peter Pindar" was in part a symptom of the general degeneracy of taste. George III was made out thrice as absurd as ever was his grandfather; but it took a Hervey to compose that picture; a Wolcot sufficed for George III and George III's subjects.

When the close of the American war, some brilliant naval victories, and the advent of Pitt to office had somewhat calmed political indignation among the general public, the disorders of the royal family took the place of politics as the subject of satire, and the incisive wit and artistic limning of Gillray bore hardly upon them.

His George III is a bulky, stupid, and sometimes good-natured fool; for some time before his mental breakdown he is drawn positively idiotic; gradually he becomes the puzzled, helpless "good old soul" which a later popular tradition prefers to picture him. But he always suggests the simple John Bull type so beloved of later draughtsmen. Charlotte, small and active, is depicted acute and alert; in later pictures her complexion is dusky and her figure deformed, but there is hardly any, if any,

caricature of her features. We see her as a canny, saving body, now, with intense carefulness, zealously frying sprats for supper while coins are falling from her bursting pocket; now eagerly welcoming her Prussian daughter-in-law, and holding out her apron to catch the shower of gold from the dowry of the princess. In one audacious drawing she presides at the royal tea-table and smilingly makes her family drink their tea without sugar. Five sulky young faces opposite form the foil to the Queen's exaggerated grin, as, showing a set of shark-like teeth, she exhorts: "Oh, my dear creatures, do but taste it, you can't think how nice it is without sugar. And then consider how much work you'll save the poor Blackamoors by leaving off the use of it! And above all remember how much expense it will save your poor Papa! O it's charming cooling drink." Beside her appears the hideous head of the King, thick-lipped, staring, grinning—"Oh delicious! delicious!" as he clumsily sips from his cup.

The unkindness of fixing upon Charlotte this charge of avarice lies in the fact that the mean economies of the palace were forced upon her by the King, against whose expressed wish Charlotte would never remonstrate. Whether he might choose to bestow on a vulgar politician (as a reward for opposing Keppel in the borough of Windsor) the valuable post of Ranger of Windsor Park, always considered a personal appanage, and assumed just then to be destined for the Princess Royal, or to forbid his household to hear concerts on Sunday evenings, or to interdict puddings on his table in order to give an example of frugality in a year of scarcity, she always acquiesced in his desire.

During her first years in England Charlotte had seemed to enjoy making handsome presents, and gave them with a royal grace: "The Duchess of Bedford has sent to Lady Bolingbroke [the famous Lady Di Spencer, after-

wards Beauclerk] a remarkably fine enamelled watch, to be shown to the Queen. The Queen desired her to put it on, that she might see how it looked—and then said it looked so well, it ought to remain by Lady Bolingbroke's side, and gave it her. Was not this done in a charming manner?"[1] She attached a similar watch to the dress of a foreign princess, so deftly that her visitor did not discover the gift till afterwards. She gave to the Duchess of Ancaster, as a memento of their journey from Mecklenburg, her own miniature set round with precious stones; even a rebuke she tempered with a costly present. The Duchess of Hamilton having come late, not for the first time, and excused herself by saying she had broken her watch, the Queen on their next meeting greeted her with a gift of a beautiful jewelled one, observing that she hoped the Duchess would now be able to be punctual. She was as fond of shopping as most women, although she often had to do it by deputy, and when Lord Harcourt went as envoy to Paris he was charged with some particular commissions for her.

That the parsimony exhibited in the royal household was not in the first instance inspired by her seems clear enough from the ease with which, in later life, when she was emancipated from the King's personal control, and had settled at Frogmore, she gave fêtes and dinners, and even appeared among the costly splendours of the Regent. But she was naturally shrewd and thrifty and in the course of her long life beside her husband had so completely adopted some of his peculiarities that she probably came to imagine a saving in small expenses to be a virtue. She was as well pleased as is many a modern collector to pick up a cheap book on a stall—not in person, of course, "but I have a servant very clever; oh it is amazing what good books there are on stalls."

In something the same way did she forfeit the good

[1] H. W., 858 (v).

opinion of Weymouth by a little piece of misplaced thrift. She observed that a draper there announced a sale of calico at sixpence a yard for ready money, and as she required a quantity for charity work she sent to purchase his entire stock, and then kept him waiting till quarter day for the money. The poor women who lost their bargains and the disappointed salesman chorused together their indignation, and Weymouth was sure that her Majesty was a miser.

Such undignified incidents revealed the good German housewife rather too plainly, and so, too, did some of the regulations of the royal houses. The cold and comfortless conditions under which equerries and ladies were obliged to spend their days struck all of them as more trying than they had anticipated. Colonel Goldsworthy expounded the conditions to Miss Burney at once: "Riding and walking and standing and bowing—what a life it is! Well, it's honour! that's one comfort; it's all honour! royal honour!—one has the honour to stand till one has not a foot left; and to ride till one's stiff, and to walk till one's ready to drop—and then one makes one's lowest bow, d'ye see, and blesses oneself with joy for the honour! . . . How do you like it, ma'am? . . . Running along in these cold passages, then bursting into rooms fit to bake you; then back again into all these agreeable puffs! Bless us! I believe in my heart there's wind enough in these passages to carry a man-of-war. . . . Let's see, how many blasts must you have every time you go to the Queen? First one upon your opening your door; then another as you get down the three steps from it, which are exposed to the wind from the garden door downstairs; then a third as you turn the corner to enter the passage; then, just as you turn towards the Queen's room comes another, and last, a whiff from the King's stairs enough to blow you a half a mile off!"[1]

[1] Madame d'Arblay, vol. iii.

Yet this cold and the early rising, and, whenever possible, violent exercise as well, were inflicted upon the princesses as a matter of course by the ignorance of their father and the indifference of their mother. Goldsworthy cautioned Miss Burney against attempting to attend the morning service in the chapel: "The princesses, used to it as they are, get regularly knocked up before this business is over, off they drop one by one: first the Queen deserts us, then Princess Elizabeth is done for; then Princess Royal begins coughing; then Princess Augusta gets the snuffles; and all the poor attendants, my poor sister at their head, drop off one after another like so many snuffs of candles; till at last, dwindle, dwindle, dwindle—not a soul goes to chapel but the King, the parson and myself; and there we three sit and freeze it out together!"[1] "It must be wholesome, it is so disagreeable," wrote poor Princess Elizabeth.

The scandal mongers found it a little difficult to make out their charge of avarice. They pretended that the Queen was accessible to bribes in the shape of jewels. A splendid tribute was sent to her from India in 1777 by the Nabob of Arcot; she received a gift of diamonds in 1785 from Warren Hastings, and a "bulse," or packet, of jewels from the Nizam of the Deccan (in 1786). These are made to do duty again and again as examples of "bribery going as *high as possible.*"

"The Queen has but one virtue, decorum," cried Burke, "and but one vice, avarice"; when the two clashed the latter, he added, was victor. Hence the royal favour to Hastings and his wife. That it did neither of them any good rather spoils the point of the invective.

Charlotte was, no doubt, much pleased by these handsome gifts of jewels. The contents of the famous "bulse" from the Nizam were made into a sort of bouquet, which she carried at the King's birthday in 1786. It figures in many

[1] Madame d'Arblay, vol. iii.

a caricature and allusion. Cardinal de Rohan, says Horace Walpole, "might not have been sent to Newgate here for using the Queen's name to get diamonds"; and again, if Madame du Barry "regains her diamonds perhaps Mrs. Hastings may carry her to court." The King had given Queen Charlotte a magnificent set of diamonds on her marriage, and she herself used to purchase jewels until, when her daughters began to grow up, she ceased doing so, because, she said, she must not show them an example of extravagance and vanity—more probably, it may be surmised, because, her means being otherwise taxed, she could not afford to do so.

Most of these jewels were not worn, but kept safely as a sort of investment, and many were destined to be sold for the benefit of the princesses, so that it may fairly be assumed that their money value constituted their charm; but to pretend that Charlotte ever influenced official favour in return for money or gifts is a calumny.

She at all events assured Miss Burney that wearing her state jewels was little but an annoyance to her. She had at the first, she said, liked her royal ornaments—"But how soon was that over! Believe me, Miss Burney, it is a pleasure of a week—a fortnight at most—and to return no more! I thought, at first, I should always choose to wear them, but the fatigue and trouble of putting them on and the care they required, and the fear of losing them—believe me, ma'am, in a fortnight's time I longed for my own earlier dress and wished never to see them more!" And she was very dutifully careful of them, placed them in charge of her second Keeper of the Robes (Mrs. Hagedorn and later Miss Burney), and usually returned them herself to the bank for custody when not wanted. There were no mysterious disappearances during her *régime*.

Charlotte certainly seems to have acquired a preference

for being attended by persons of the middle class rather than by ladies of nobler birth and breeding. There was a double convenience in the change; middle-class people cost less and they would be more likely to render the absolute submission their Majesties expected. It is recorded that the maids of honour had rebelled against the royal reform which abolished supper, or, in other words, compelled them to provide it themselves. They had sent a written remonstrance to the Steward, Lord Talbot, who could do nothing but consult his Majesty. The King replied severely that the *regimen* adopted by himself and the Queen could not be altered, but he permitted a handsome compensation of £70 a year to be added to the salaries.

No such independence need be feared in a Miss Burney or a Miss Planta. They would hardly be likely to dissent from the royal opinions. The gifts, too, expected by the aristocracy were costly; a maid of honour received £1,000 as a wedding present; a dress, a book, any little toy or trinket gave pleasure to the less aristocratic, who could, moreover, be conveyed in hired coaches, employed in shopping, and made practically useful in ways in which no nobleman's daughter, probably, either could or would.

The Queen's suite came, then, to be recruited from persons of a class somewhat below the notice of Vernons, Waldegraves, and Harcourts, as poor Miss Burney and Miss Planta found when they had the ill fortune to accompany the Queen on her second visit to Nuneham and Oxford. The system did not increase the comfort of the royal establishment. There was actually no table to which such visitors as bishops or foreign attachés could be invited, save that presided over by Mrs. Schwellenberg, and the natural corollary, which speedily followed, of filling the more menial offices, which had hitherto been in charge of highly reputable families, with servants of a

lower grade, was very likely responsible for the recurrent instances of drunkenness, theft, and violence among the lower servants of the royal family. Even if the disorderliness sprang from the same causes as the excesses of George III's sons and the failures of his ministers and his forces, one might have expected that in the domestic sphere the Queen would have attempted to remedy the evils. Unfortunately in this, as in almost every sphere of activity, she had made for herself that law of inaction which she came to identify with dignity.

The gentlemen who were long in the royal service, though some of them enjoyed considerable perquisites, seldom obtained from their majesties rewards or gifts of any very generous stamp. The King's favourite equerry, Major Price, was actually obliged to resign his post from inability to bear the expense of it, and the King, who feelingly lamented his departure, never seemed to recollect that he might himself easily have obviated it. He was, however, sometimes spasmodically generous. The Queen was more cautious: though she had, after a considerable while, provided her German page, Albert, with a house, she promptly deprived him of it as soon as he was promoted to the rather more lucrative position of a King's page.

His daughter ascribed the reason for this to his not being a favourite with Mrs. Schwellenberg; even the apologetic Miss Burney, who suffered dire things from that *Cerbera* of the royal household, considered it a pity that so many little gifts or concessions, which Charlotte intended kindly, should, through being dispensed by Mrs. Schwellenberg, become very far from gracious.

The enormous superiority of Majesty over common humanity appears to have reduced humanity, in the Schwellenberg's eyes, to one insignificant dead level. It was a conviction apparently not very different from Charlotte's own, but a world of difference lay in the mode of expressing it.

"I tell you once," says the Schwellenberg to Miss Burney, "I shall do for you what I can; you are to have a gown." Miss Burney felt and looked surprised and offended. With greater emphasis *Cerbera* named her authority: "The Queen will give you a gown, the Queen says you are not rich." Further surprise and disclaimer from Miss Burney, greater wonder and displeasure of Mrs. Schwellenberg. "Miss Bernar," cried she angrily, "I tell you once, when the Queen will give you a gown you must be humble, thankful, when [*i.e.*, even if] you are Duchess of Ancaster!"[1]

[1] Madame d'Arblay, vol. ii, p. 437.

CHAPTER X

CHARLOTTE'S CHARITIES AND KINDNESSES—MRS. DELANY, CHARLOTTE AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS

THOSE who blandly accused Queen Charlotte of avarice pretended that she gave nothing in charity. They were, it must be supposed, ignorant of a marked trait in the Queen's character. She gave large sums regularly and unfailingly. That she inquired carefully into the merits of every case, never gave at random, and seldom profusely, marks a virtue sufficiently rare in any age; she gave what really suited the case, and she never wearied of her pensioners.

Institutions or agencies for distributing relief were in that age few, and charity had to be bestowed upon individuals. To Charlotte this seemed to involve a personal knowledge of the recipients, which she managed to obtain through a few trusted pages and one or two of her Ladies-in-waiting. Each page was assigned a certain district of London, in which he investigated the cases selected, and kept a sort of watch upon them, so that he might report to the Queen whether her beneficiaries dealt properly with the relief given. The strictest orders were issued for secrecy, and a page who betrayed the Queen's confidence was dismissed.

This secrecy Charlotte herself observed religiously. She held it right to keep all her charitable deeds hidden; and the Princess Elizabeth records her own surprise when, upon picking up a note-book accidentally left open upon a table, she saw a list of some of the extensive

charities which her mother regularly distributed, and which she had never suspected. But Charlotte's modest concealment had one unfortunate result, for as her good deeds were not known she was with apparent justice abused for the omission of them. The King was no giver save for his political purposes, and thus both King and Queen lost a certain amount of respect and gratitude which Charlotte, at least, might have won, while to the world she appeared to ignore a duty in the fulfilment of which royalty is especially expected to set an example.

One instance is enough to give: at the close of the Napoleonic war a subscription was set on foot for the poor of Germany, reduced to starvation by the French invasions. In aid of it a fête and fancy sale, in fact, a modern bazaar, was given, to which the Queen's sole ostensible contribution was a pile of needlework—and loud was the public indignation. She had really sent £200, but with such strict precautions for secrecy that the truth never leaked out.

The Queen endeavoured to divide her bounty fairly among the poor of different ranks. She had a special kindness for widows, and she maintained thirty-six as life pensioners: twelve belonged to the gentle class, twelve to the middle class, and twelve were of low degree. They were granted pensions proportioned to their station in life, which were paid quarterly with absolute punctuality.

Though it is hardly accurate to claim for Charlotte the merit of procuring the pension and baronetcy for the family of the gallant Captain Farmer [1]—for Farmer's heroism rang through the country and through parliament—yet she gave her help to one less famous, but as brave; Farmer's mate, William Moore, had wanted to take the wounded captain "on his back" and swim with

[1] *Cf.* "Deeds of Naval Daring."

him to succour. Moore was himself seriously hurt, and Charlotte had him brought with the utmost care to Windsor, where her own surgeon tended him, and when the grateful sailor came to express his thanks she had awaiting him an envelope containing "his Majesty's reward"—his commission as lieutenant.

The Queen had to be guarded, however, from the assurance and importunity of the crowd of would-be suppliants, especially as the unprotected manner in which the royal family lived—without guards, and with few attendants—made it both necessary and difficult to investigate every case beforehand, and Charlotte thought it advisable to add a new rule to the palace etiquette, and only receive petitions from her Mistress of the Robes. She practically explained the reason to Fanny Burney, when the latter, in defiance of etiquette, helped a shipwrecked sailor to draw up a petition: "when with equal sweetness and humanity she had delivered the sum to one of her pages to give to him, [she] said to me: 'Now, though your account of this poor man makes him seem to be a real object, I must give you one caution: there are so many impostors about who will try to speak to you, that if you are not upon your guard you may be robbed yourself before you can get any help: I think, therefore, you had better never trust yourself in a room alone with anybody you don't know.'"

There was less security in the Queen's Lodge at Windsor or Kew than in an ordinary private house. Probably this explains the amusing reception the King met with, when, going unexpectedly one day to Windsor, he "thought he would go into Mrs. Delany's, and he knocked at a room door, a young lady . . . was sitting in the room and said 'Who is there?' A voice reply'd '*It is me*,' then said she, 'Me may stay where he is'; knock'd again, and she again said, 'Who is there?' The voice answered, '*It is me*'; then said she, 'Me is

impertinent and may go about his business': upon the knocking being repeated a third time some person who was with her advised her to open the door, and *see* who it could be, when, to her great astonishment, who should it be but the King himself. All she could utter was, 'What *shall* I say!' 'Nothing at all,' said H. M., 'you was very right to be cautious who you admitted.'"

George III was laughed at for his fondness for old ladies. With old Mrs. Howe, a sister of his favourites, Admiral and General Howe,[1] he was extraordinarily familiar. Old Mrs. Delany was another and more interesting *protégée* domiciled at Windsor. But it was Charlotte who directed the delicate kindness shown to her, and she reaped an enthusiastic affection in return.

Mrs. Delany is one of the principal witnesses to Queen Charlotte's charming manner of doing favours, and to her conduct of the royal home. Unhampered by Miss Burney's artistic self-consciousness, belonging to a more aristocratic rank, and possessed of the gracious manners of an older generation, she was a competent critic. By birth she was a Granville, and in her beautiful youth an ornament of the court of Caroline, but her life was ruined by the political intrigues of her family, who forced her into a hateful marriage in order to gain a vote. Left a widow, and poor, insulted by a professing lover,[2] and neglected by her own kin, Mrs. Pendarves betook herself to Ireland, then the favourite refuge of broken hearts or broken fortunes, and there, in course of time, wedded worthy old Dean Delany. Upon her second husband's death she returned to England, still lovely in old age, and with her rare charm unimpaired. She used to spend half the year at Bulstrode

[1] They were left-handedly descended from the first Elector, through the Countess of Darlington.

[2] The "Indian prince" of her Memoirs was Lord Baltimore.

with her one surviving intimate friend, the Dowager Duchess of Portland.

It was there that the King and Queen made her acquaintance, when they paid a visit to the Duchess in 1781; and Mrs. Delany observed at once the considerateness of her Majesty, who sent the Princess Royal to fetch her, and as the old lady hastened to obey, came herself halfway to meet her, calling out; "Though I desired you to come, I did *not* desire you to *run* and fatigue yourself." "The Queen sat down and called me to her to talk about the chenille work, praising it much more than it deserv'd, but with a politeness that could not fail of giving pleasure, and indeed her manners are most engaging, and there is so much dignity and affability blended, that it is hard to say whether one's respect or love predominates." After the royal party had been regaled with tea and chocolate, rolls, cakes, fruit, ice, etc., the King began to talk to Mrs. Delany about her botanical collections, which were her hobby, and had become mildly famous; "I kept my distance till the Queen called to me to answer some questions about a flower, when I came, and the King brought a chair and set it at the table opposite to the Queen, and graciously took me by the hand and seated me on it, an honour I could not receive without some confusion and hesitation. 'Sit down, sit down,' said her Majesty, 'it is *not* everybody has a chair brought them by a king.'"

In the course of the conversation Mrs. Delany ventured to say that she was particularly happy to pay her duty to her Majesty at that moment, as it allowed her to see so many of the royal family. "The Queen said, she had not yet seen *all* her children. On which the King said: 'You may put Mrs. Delany into the way of doing that by naming a day for her to drink tea at Windsor Castle,' and the following day was named.

"We went as appointed," she wrote, "and were conducted to the lower private apartment of the Castle. In the first large room with great bay windows were the three eldest Princess's and the ladies that attend them. We passed through to the Queen's bedchamber, where she was with Lady Weymouth and Lady Charlotte Finch. She received the Duchess of Portland with gracious smiles, and was so easy and condescending in her manner to me that I felt no perturbation, tho' it is *so long a time* since *I was conversant with Kings and Courts*! The Queen sate down and not only made the ladies do the same, but had a chair placed for me opposite to her, and commanded me to sit down, asking me at the same time, 'if it was too much in the air of the door and window?' What dignity such strokes of humanity and *delicate good breeding* add to the highest rank! In that room were the two youngest Princess's, one [Mary] *not three*, the other [Amelia] not a year old; both lovely children. Princess Mary, a delightful little creature, curtseying and prattling to everybody . . . a little before seven the King and his *seven sons* came into the room, and after a great deal of gracious conversation the Queen told the Duchess of Portland she hoped she would excuse her taking her *usual walk* with the King and all the Princes and Princesses on Windsor Terrass, as the people constantly expected to see them." All this time music was playing just under the window, "that sounded very sweet and pleasant." The walk lasted half an hour, and afterwards the royal family returned to a room lighted up, where the tea was ready, and music playing. It was evidently a sort of gala day, and the young people "had a mind to dance. They were permitted to do so, and were a pretty show indeed."

As Mrs. Delany stood watching them with pleasure, the King sent the Duke of Montagu to her with a chair to desire her to sit down. The young princes came up

and talked to her nicely, and she heard the King telling the Prince of Wales that they had "better dance no more to *that* musick, being composed of hautbois and other wind musick, as he thought it *must be painful* to them to play any longer, and his Majesty was sure the Prince, etc., would be unwilling to hurt them, but at the Queen's house they should have properer musick and dance as long as they liked." Hereupon the little company crossed over "the great court and part of Windsor town," to the Queen's Lodge, where a concert began at their entry in a room "*éblouissante* after coming out of the sombre apartment in Windsor, all furnished with beautiful Indian paper, chairs covered with different embroideries of the richest colors, glasses, tables, sconces, in the best taste, the whole calculated to give the greatest cheerfulness to the place"; and here the young people danced together till nine o'clock or later, first minuets, then their favourite country dances.

Often, after this, the Queen took pains to gratify the charming old lady for whom she and the King felt a real liking. Some one told her that Mrs. Delany wished she had a lock of her hair: "and she sent me one with her own royal fingers." She commanded one of the great-nephews to be set down for the Charterhouse (though Mrs. Delany's niece had married a country gentleman of good means); she invited the Duchess to bring her guest to Windsor to see a stag-hunt, when the animal was brought in a cart, and a number of visitors came in coaches to see the start of the chase. After several conversations with Charlotte, Mrs. Delany wrote that "so *much propriety*, so *excellent a heart*, such *true religious principles*, give a lustre to her royalty that crown and sceptre cannot bestow."

At length, the death of the Duchess of Portland deprived Mrs. Delany of friend and refuge together. Her sensitive pride declined all the kindly offers of the young Duke and Duchess; if she accepted anything from them,

she said, it might look like a reflection upon her beloved dead friend: and it was at this juncture that their Majesties gracefully intervened. Knowing that she must miss her country home, they made a gift to her of a house in Windsor, which they took a pleasure in fitting up themselves, and at the same time gave her £300 a year to maintain it with—"and to prevent even the *appearance* of a pension,[1] as well as to obviate the possibility of its being diminished by taxation, the Queen used regularly to bring her the half year's amount in a pocket-book when she made her a visit." The delicate courtesy with which the whole was done made Mrs. Delany the enthusiastic champion of the royal family during the three remaining years of her life.

The house was ready by the beginning of September 1785, and Charlotte herself wrote to announce it:

My dear Mrs. Delany will be glad to hear that I am charged by the King to summon her to her new abode at Windsor for Tuesday next, when she will find all the most essential parts of the house ready, excepting some little trifles which it will be better for Mrs. Delany to direct herself in person, or by her little deputy, Miss Port [Mrs. Delany's grand-niece]. I need not I hope add that I shall be extreamly glad and happy to see so amiable an inhabitant in this our sweet retreat, and wish very sincerely that my dear Mrs. Delany may enjoy every blessing amongst us that her merits deserve and that we may long enjoy her amiable society, Amen. These are the true sentiments of my dear Mrs. Delany's

Very affectionate Queen,

CHARLOTTE.

Queen's Lodge, Windsor.
The 3rd of Sept^br^, 1785.

I must also beg that Mrs. Delany will choose her own time of coming as will best suit her own convenience.[2]

[1] By this time the word had acquired a sinister connotation, and suggested political bribery.

[2] "Correspondence of Mrs. Delany," second series, vol. iii, p. 280.

When Mrs. Delany arrived at eight in the evening, the King was there to receive her, and next morning the Queen sent to know how she was, and whether her coming would not be troublesome. In the course of the first fortnight their Majesties went five times to drink tea with her (*i.e.* after dinner), and the princesses thrice, and they would generally stay two hours at least. "Their visits here are paid in the most quiet, private manner, like those of the most consoling, interested friends: so that I may truly say, they are *a Royal cordial.*"

Charlotte's tact was indeed perfect, and she knew how to convey sympathy without any of the phrases which those in trouble find so hard to bear. She did not at first urge the sad old lady to visit her at the Queen's Lodge, but as her spirits gradually revived, she would send her, often by Miss Burney, pretty, half-jesting invitations, which could with perfect propriety be declined, and thus accustomed her to feel at home with her royal neighbours.

My dearest Mrs. Delany,

If coming to me will not fatigue your spirits *too* much I shall receive you with open arms, and am,

Your affectionate friend,

Charlotte.

The King, too, gratified Mrs. Delany in a manner specially pleasing to her; he asked her to come to the daily private prayers in the royal chapel, and to make it possible and easy, gave her a very nice chair in which she was carried thither. Thus she soon became almost a member of the royal family, and the picture of the family party as she often beheld it in private hours is certainly very charming. She wrote, in the November of 1785:

I have been several evenings at the Queen's Lodge with no other company but their own most lovely family. They sit

round a large table, on which are books, work, pencils and paper. The Queen has the goodness to make me sit down next to her; and delights me with her conversation, which is informing, elegant and pleasing beyond description; whilst the younger part of the family are drawing and working, etc. etc., the beautiful babe, Princess Amelia, bearing her part in the entertainment, sometimes in one of her sisters' laps, sometimes playing with the King on the carpet, which altogether exhibits such a wonderful scene, as would require an Addison's pen or a Vandyke's pencil to do justice to it. In the *next* room is the band of music which plays from 8 o'clock till ten. The King generally directs them what pieces of music to play, chiefly Handel.

In another letter, Mrs. Delany tells how she was asked to come with Lady Bute and her daughter to tea (served between 7 and 8), and found only the King and Queen and the elder princesses, the sons and the younger children having gone to their own houses for the evening. A solitary Lady of the Bedchamber was in attendance:

And though it *was a Circle* of the most aweful nature it was far from a painful one. The gracious manners of their Majesties and the Princesses made it perfectly easy and pleasant. I was dismissed, as an invalid, at nine o'clock; but the truth was I believe the Queen had a mind to indulge me with an hour's conversation with Miss Burney, whose apartment is upon the same floor and I had the happiness of finding her recovered from a long and dangerous illness. And here I have a new field to expatiate upon, on the Queen's *great goodness* to her, whose attention to her has been that of a tender friend; and Miss Burney now only wants time to restore her to strength and her happy occupation, which she delights in. I have been able to obey their commands in attending them *every day* at the Lodge till yesterday morning when they went to London again, and I at present feel quite desolate.

After this it became an established habit for Mrs. Delany to go whenever she felt able to Miss Burney's

apartment, where, after the walk on the terrace, the King himself or one of the princesses, often the sweet little Amelia who had taken a great fancy to Miss Burney, would "come into the room, take me by the hand and lead me into the drawing-room [Mrs. Delany's sight was failing her], where there is a chair ready for me by the Queen's left hand. . . . A vacant chair is left for the King whenever he pleases to sit down in it. *Every one* is employed with their pencil, needle or knotting. Between the pieces of music the conversation is very pleasant, and for an hour before the conclusion of the whole the King plays at backgammon with one of his equerries, and I am generally dismissed."[1]

While this peaceful scene, so soothing to aged Mrs. Delany, was enacting, night after night, the gentlemen attendant upon the King were wearily standing in the music room, ready to listen when their restless master sauntered in to chatter to them; the governesses, Miss Planta and Miss Goldsworthy, had an hour or two to themselves, and Madame Schwellenberg was playing endless games of cards with her tired and bored assistant, Miss Burney. There was no other society within the royal dwelling.

Among the most important of Charlotte's charities were her schools. So admirable a mother might naturally be considered an authority upon education. And she felt in it a genuine interest which took the practical form of providing a suitable training for orphaned and friendless girls. She directed and supported, partially or wholly, no less than three schools, which corresponded to the three divisions of society she recognized in her charity for widows. One was for the orphaned daughters of officers in the army and navy, fifty of each; the second for daughters of poor clergymen and reduced shop-

[1] Vol. iii, p. 45.

keepers, and, in a third, at Windsor, twenty respectable girls of a humbler class were trained as servants. On the second of these schools the Queen is said to have spent £500 a year throughout her life; the girls were taught to embroider, but the Queen was to have the whole of their work, and she and her daughters had some beautiful dresses made of it, and fitted up several rooms with furniture and hangings. Her support of the school was therefore sneered at as a thrifty speculation, rather than a charity, and it must be owned that there was sometimes about her charity an afterthought of prudence not altogether regal.

An officer's widow once petitioned for her help to provide for a large family whose father had fallen in the King's service. Charlotte, as was her wont, had the case investigated, and, finding the circumstances to be in fact very hard, generously took upon herself the education of the entire family of eight—or, according to another authority, twelve. They were placed in suitable schools and provided with all that was necessary, until, later, her Majesty learned that the widow had married a man of some property, whereupon she directed them all to be removed from school and despatched to their mother, who was now, said the royal benefactress, well able to maintain them.

Whether Charlotte's patronage of the excellent educational movements of the day, whose apostles were Mrs. Trimmer, Hannah More, and Robert Raikes, amounted to much more than friendly sympathy may be doubted. She expressed much interest in Raikes' endeavours to create Sunday schools, desired him to come and see her, and after hearing his plans requested the Vicar of Windsor to set about forming similar schools in his parish. In the same way, when Kirby, the King's Clerk of the Works at Kew, brought to her notice the writings of his daughter, Mrs. Trimmer, Charlotte sent for her, listened

to her expositions, and begged her to write one more book, upon the proper methods of distributing charity. She took an opportunity, also, of visiting Mrs. Trimmer's School of Industry at Brentford, where the children were taught religion and the art of spinning. It was a pretty occupation, she thought, which she would have liked to learn herself.

In purely intellectual interests she had no share.

Her own education had been wholly of the schoolroom type, and she was not able to judge of any but conventional studies. Her handwriting was beautiful, and was deservedly taken for a model. It is of the style called "Italian," but the letters are much more roundly and clearly formed than is usual. Her daughters do not rival it; the elder two, indeed, wrote clearly and prettily, but the writing of their sisters grew worse and worse. To write artistically, in those days of quill pens and of endless letters, required a good tool, and the Queen was extremely particular about hers.

"I am commanded by the Queen," wrote Augusta in 1808 to Lady Chichester, "to write to you upon a subject which is of great *consequence to Her* and, may I also add, of *no small importance* to myself. Namely the total impossibility of writing with any Pens but those sold by Palmer Portman (?) at East Grinstead. . . . Now the Queen wishes you would be so good as to send to Him to inquire whether he cuts them of various sorts and for different *handwriting*—in such case she would wish to see *some samples*, and then she would be certain always to get of the same sort by sending to Him—and according to the old Proverb, Tel Maitre tel Valet, I should *also suit myself* with good Pens, I never stir without one of Palmer's *invaluable* little Boxes—but sometimes I meet with a *bad Pen* which makes me *rather unhappy*. . . ."

Charlotte was too apt to suppose the mere approval of royalty to be of so great value that nothing more could be

needed; her patronage of a charity concert by her presence alone, or perhaps by the purchase of two or three seats, her countenance of a famous singer or actor by an order to perform at Court—unpaid—struck the public as ridiculous, and satirists were delighted to avenge the unlucky Madame Mara, Mrs. Siddons, or Kemble, who were more than once summoned to come to Windsor, at their own expense, and dismissed after the performance without so much as refreshment. The famous dramatic reading which Mrs. Siddons and Kemble had to give before the royal family, seems to have been the Queen's form of concession to the fashionable rage for private theatricals. She had a high conception of the educative power of the drama, but unfortunately she did not consult qualified persons in the choice of the pieces; and Miss Burney was often vexed at the poor quality of the stuff she had to read aloud. On this occasion the two famous tragedians were required to read aloud a comedy of no great merit, and to proceed through the entire play without pause, and standing up the whole time, in the midst of a dead silence. This was the rule of "the Queen's etiquette," for it was by particular favour that Miss Burney used to be allowed to sit. One of the royal children pointed out to the Queen that Mrs. Siddons looked very tired, and such was her condescension that the royal family withdrew into another room that the exhausted lady might repose on a seat for a little while.

The importance attached to standing is a curious example of the Queen's invariable insistence upon etiquette. It was only for the aged or for personal friends that she would relax the rule which she had laid down from the beginning. At her first City banquet, where some acquiescence in customary ways might have been politic, she had refused to admit the claim of her ladies-in-waiting to sit down with her. Horace Walpole's expectation

of being "dead of fatigue with my royal visitors" may be remembered; the gouty old man of seventy-eight was obliged to entertain the Queen and eight royal ladies (July 1795), and was standing for three hours. Walpole, however, does not mention that this was due to his own polite obstinacy. Charlotte writes to the Harcourts of the extreme pleasure the royal party had enjoyed: "Independent of all the fine things which are to be seen at Strawberry Hill the Company of the Host is what we one and all were the most pleased with; and I should myself have injoyed His Presence still more had I not continually been thinking of the Fatigue our visit made Him suffer. I desired and intreated him to sit down but in vain, and I fear his great civility will take weeks for Him to recover."

On the other hand there is the unpleasant story of poor Lady Townshend's distress at the christening of Princess Charlotte. The Archbishop was slow, Lady Townshend delicate, and the kindly Princess of Wales in a whisper asked the Queen "'Will your Majesty command Lady Townshend to sit down?' to which the Queen replied, blowing her snuff from her fingers, 'She may stand, she may stand.'"[1]

Charlotte exhibited the proverbial royal memory in one rather rare aspect. She never forgot an old servant, though long out of sight. Her dependents were always captivated by her recollection of their families and circumstances. The daughters and granddaughters of her first and more confidential ladies-in-waiting were sure of her sympathy, and she brought up the princesses to the same amiable constancy. "I do love all that belongs to the dear Duchess of Ancaster," wrote Elizabeth, some years after the death of the Duchess.[2] Fanny Burney, for so short a time one of the royal Household, was always

[1] Lady C. Campbell.

[2] Mistress of the Robes, 1761-93.

treated by Charlotte herself and by the Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth as an honoured friend. A granddaughter of Lady Holdernesse[1]—and daughter of the unhappy and disgraced Countess of Carmarthen—was appointed lady-in-waiting for her grandmother's sake, "for do my mother justice," wrote Princess Elizabeth, announcing the appointment, "she never forgets her old friends, and sooner or later her motives will be thoroughly known, though poor soul, she is torn to pieces on all sides when there is anything to give away. . . . She told me that she would name Mrs. Leigh and I entreated her to do it directly for otherwise she would be plagued to death."

Perhaps the kindness of the thought mitigates the oddity of the Queen's idea of tempting an aged invalid's appetite: Augusta writes that her mother is glad to learn that "the Physical people have allowed Lady Holdernesse to eat anything she likes," and had rejoiced the heart of the Princess, who looked after the little farm at Frogmore ("my Hobby Horse") by ordering "two Pigs which have been born and bred at Frogmore" to be sent up, by the early stage, which pigs were of the Chinese breed, and particularly delicate. But it is to be feared that the infirm Countess would hardly be the better for the sudden intimation that the Queen would come to visit her "*this evening*, and shall be very happy to meet the Princess of Orange[2] and any other Persons Lady Holdernesse may choose to invite, but the Queen particularly desires that she will *not hurry* herself, etc."

Charlotte's unfortunate conviction that the shortest notice gave least trouble was apt to cause consternation to her hosts. Her daughters did their best to modify the

[1] Lady-in-waiting, 1770-1801.

[2] A refugee in England during the French occupation of the Netherlands.

surprise and inconvenience. But the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Howard de Walden, whose wives were in delicate health at the time when the Queen suddenly announced a visit, were both dreadfully flustered, and pressed Lord Harcourt anxiously for directions about the etiquette, of which her Majesty would be critical, however ill or unprepared hostess or host might be: who ought to say grace before dinner and who after? will the royal party come to the private chapel, and if so, must the servants be turned out? The Duke of Marlborough's queries ran into six pages.

The Harcourts were evidently very "safe" people, and never betrayed confidences. As friends to the whole family (whom they never "gave away" to each other) they must have been above price, and Charlotte recognized this.

She poured out her feelings to these old friends, and would even occasionally relapse into fun, which she does not seem to have ever permitted herself to do with her own family. So late as 1793 a flash of her early girlish mirth appears in an absurdly dramatic letter, evidently alluding to an old play recently studied—or read aloud.

Odds Bodykyns, Lord Harcourt. The K^g^. orders me to say, that he is of oppinion y^r^ presence at Windsor during this week [Race week] would be very agreeable to Him & to us all. I do assure you, & I promise you faithfully that when we have done broiling at Ascot, you shall Cool y^r^ self at Frogmore, where it looks very *Ruralistic* at present, & the Plants have not suffered much from the *Frostes* of last week; & *Oh dear Heart* everything comes on as one could wish; & the *good lady & little Mistress* approve of all that is done, which I hope you will also grace with y^r^ approbation.

I beg my best Compliments to L^dy^ Harcourt, & hope to see you by to-Morrow by Dinner-time. For though I have wrote

in Green's Language, by way of making you laugh, it is notwithstanding true that the K^g ordered me to invite you.

CHARLOTTE.

the 9th of June, 1793."

Charlotte had not a much-developed sense of humour, and she was without that English education which might have taught her, at all events, to recognize it. Perhaps one of the difficulties in Charlotte's way was her own literalness in an epoch when fine Englishmen were light-hearted and witty.

CHAPTER XI

CHARLOTTE AND POLITICS. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF HER

POLITICS have seldom afforded much scope for our Queens Consort. Caroline I had been unpopular from the belief that she wielded influence in that sphere —that it was a wise influence made it no better. Charlotte, neither by instinct nor training fitted to understand English politics, was only anxious to remain aloof from them, and soon, according to her usual mental habit, came to regard what she shrank from as wrong, and considered her own abstention from interference as a moral duty.

"I am very much obliged to you," she writes in 1796 to Lord Harcourt, "for having afforded me an opportunity of clearing my own character from meddling in Politics, *which I abhor equal to Sin.*" An unpleasant instance of ingratitude had occurred; a Mr. Adams had made use of the Queen's name while electioneering, and Charlotte "thought it but right to myself and him, especially as his wife enjoys still a Pension from me, to have Him made acquainted of such a report being about and insisting upon his contradicting it immediately."

The early verdict of the courtiers that she was "an unmeddling queen" was a term of considerable approbation. But that the King "never spoke to her one word of politics" can only have been a plausible statement at the very beginning of her married life, for her behaviour in the Drawing Rooms, it was soon noted, reflected exactly

the King's attitude. Lady Bute and the Duchess of Bedford found themselves and their daughters invited to or excluded from her little parties, greeted or ignored in the "Circle," according to the standing of their husbands in his Majesty's good graces. It was the opposite plan to that of Caroline I, who had taken pains to welcome the ladies of all politics, and thus, as far as possible, to prevent society from identifying itself with party.

It must have been early in her career that Charlotte held the odd little conversation with the Duchess of Northumberland, subsequently reported to Horace Walpole by a gentleman usher. The Queen was driving out with the Duchess, and told her with a certain air of triumph that Lord Chatham had accepted a pension. The Duchess remaining silent, the young Queen asked: "You don't speak, are you not glad?" "I don't know, Madam, whether I ought to be glad or not," was the cautious reply. "Why," said the Queen, "don't you see that the King can now do what he will?"

She soon learned to conceal her feelings even sedulously: "that little dear word, silence" became almost a law, and she would only adventure into the stream of politics from such, to her, religious motives as the welfare of her family at Strelitz, or the furtherance of peace.

It is credibly reported that in 1771, when the Earl of Halifax died, it was Charlotte's influence which secured the appointment of the incompetent Earl of Suffolk as Secretary of State for the Northern Department, because he had undertaken, in the event of obtaining office, to "take charge of" the finances of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and at least £36,000 was paid from the public funds toward the Duke's debts. The excuse alleged for this was that the outfit of Charlotte in 1761 had absorbed five years' revenue of the tiny state, and, less plausibly, that the visits of her brothers to England had been ruinously expensive. Considering that apart-

ments were provided for them in the royal palaces and that they were supposed to be Charlotte's guests, the plea seems ungracious, especially as Prince Charles had been amply provided for in Hanover, and his two younger brothers given commissions in the army there. Perhaps some consideration was due from George III who compelled Prince Ernest, as well as Princess Christina, to relinquish a scheme of marriage with a wealthy English subject, and after all, the sum expended was a trifle beside the amounts paid from the national purse to a host of aristocratic sinecure-holders.

With regard to the efforts tentatively made by the King and Queen towards obtaining, through private agents, terms of peace with America which the Ministers were unable or unwilling to negociate, little need be said, for no importance attached to the obscure overtures countenanced by the ministry of either side. The employment of a pious Moravian bookseller, Hutten, in 1778-9, was attributed to Charlotte's suggestion; the man was personally acquainted with Franklin, but his amateur attempts were foredoomed to failure and only produced a little sarcasm on the Queen's *bourgeois* notions of politics.

It was, of course, the King's illness which suddenly destroyed Charlotte's reputation for not meddling, and saddled her with imputations, never quite laid to rest, of using "backstairs influence" in political matters. The myth may be said to have been created by Burke, eagerly used by the satirists and adopted by the Prince of Wales and his faction as a kind of political creed, in which Sir Gilbert Elliot, at any rate, honestly believed, though it may be doubted if anybody else did. To Gillray and some other acute observers, the cream of this jest of the Queen's interposition in party warfare lay in the probability of her Majesty's ignorancec of most of

the questions at issue and her lack of concern for most of the interests involved.

Rowlandson (who had previously executed a pretty picture called "The Times," exhibiting the Prince of Wales led towards a throne by Britannia, Commerce, and the Lord Mayor, though menaced by a set of German furies, led by the Queen and Mrs. Schwellenberg) exhibited on 26th December 1788, "The Prospect before us." The Queen and Pitt are sharing the crown, the former held carefully in leading strings by the latter; Mrs. Schwellenberg with the Chancellor's mace and purse[1] is strutting towards the House of Lords; Warren Hastings aside observes: "My diamonds will now befriend me, huzza," and the Queen is saying: "I know nothing of the matter, I follow Billy's advice."

Rowlandson was repenting of his early apotheosis of the Prince, and three days after "The Prospect before us," atoned by rearranging his old cartoon of "The Times" ("A Touch on the Times") to exhibit the Prince led by Sheridan as "Liberty out at elbows" to a throne occupied by a money bag, while Fox, as "Justice" bears dice boxes for scales and a bludgeon for a sword. Sherry is picking the Prince's pocket on the way; Britannia betrays a cloven foot, and Pitt, bearing a huge extinguisher, stumbles on his way over the British lion. It is no inapt portrayal of the shameful muddle of affairs.

Perhaps the Queen's really decisive step was taken in November 1788, when she sent General Harcourt to inform Pitt of all that had taken place in the conferences between the King, the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, herself and the Chancellor. She had more than a suspicion, clearly, that Thurlow might not prove straightforward, and it was upon her invitation that Pitt came himself to Windsor next day.

[1] Was Thurlow supposed to be intriguing with Mrs. Schwellenberg?

Thenceforth the alliance of the Queen, Pitt, and Thurlow was treated as a recognized fact by the politicians and wits, from Burke to Gillray and Horace Walpole. In other words, Charlotte had been forced by circumstances into a prominent place in politics.

Gillray, as usual, interpreted the situation as the public beheld it. His "Three Wierd Sisters,"[1] a delightful travesty of one of Fuseli's bombastic illustrations of Shakespeare, portrays Pitt, Dundas, and Thurlow as the three Witches, "Votaries of the Moon," gazing, finger on lip, on the bright side of the orb, which is grotesquely limned with the Queen's profile, graciously but absurdly smiling upon them. The dark side of the moon is sketched also, to show the sleeping profile of the King.

Charlotte never forgot that in the indecent debates upon the Regency Pitt had been her constant and effective defender. She was hardly likely to forgive the tergiversation of Thurlow, who, besides, had none of the courteous restraint of manner which Charlotte liked in Pitt, and possibly may not always have been even polite. Once at the royal Drawing Room a lady asked him "when he was going into his new house" (a house which when built he had taken a dislike to); "Madam," was Thurlow's violent answer, "the Queen has just asked that impudent question, and as I would not tell her I will not tell you."

In the struggle for mastery which ensued between Pitt and Thurlow, Charlotte, when peace could no longer be kept, was sure to declare for Pitt, and to her influence with the King, which had grown strong since his discovery of the intrigues over the Regency Bill, was ascribed the final resignation of Thurlow.

The most audacious of all Gillray's pictures,[2] at once a caricature of Fuseli's illustration of Milton, and a hit at Burke's wild invective, figures the moment of decision. Pitt and Thurlow, as Satan and Death, are aiming at

[1] 23rd December 1791. [2] 14th September 1792. See Note 11 at end.

each other, a kind of crowned Fury (Sin)—only conventionally to be taken for the Queen, for there is no likeness—parts them brandishing the Key of the Backstairs, "the Instrument of All our Woe." In fact Charlotte could, and probably did, reveal to the King the truth as to Thurlow's intrigues with Fox and the Prince of Wales, and thus induce him to overcome his partiality for the Chancellor. The unbridled insolence of Thurlow's language upon the monarch, whose peculiar adviser he was supposed to be, was such as to lead grave Lord Kenyon to sum up to grave Lord Eldon that "Thurlow is, in short, a Beast."

So long as Pitt lived, his steady, unshaken resolution supplied exactly the lead which Charlotte required. He once tried to stir her to a more queenly part by begging her to "Remember, Madam, you have the eyes of eight millions of his Majesty's subjects fixed upon you";[1] it was the wrong argument, the idea of publicity paralyzed her. She preferred to trust to external authority and do what she could to support it. Addington she found as useless in her personal difficulties as he proved in the difficulties of the nation, and she was driven to remonstrate with him on the fussy objections he always made to any wish or plan of the King's, however trivial it might be, thus irritating him superfluously. Perceval she found a better adviser, and she had begun to treat him as a friend, when her feelings were terribly shocked by his assassination.

It would seem as if it were only from lack of other support that she felt obliged to trust herself to her eldest son in her declining years. At all events she found it easy to acquiesce in his family tyranny, and she was by that time outside the sphere of party politics.

That her view of politics was essentially parochial rendered her feelings during the great war wholly those of the woman; grief and dread possessed her; she

[1] Harcourt Papers.

comprehended little, as a sovereign, of the greatness of the principles at stake, while to feel any triumph in the great victories she probably would regard as wrong, nor did her spirits rise to taking much pleasure in the festivals which celebrated them. Writing to Lady Harcourt on 30th October 1797, when Duncan's narrowly snatched victory off Camperdown had saved England from imminent fear of invasion, and the mutinies in the fleet were barely put down, she says:

"Oh how various are the trials of Mankind, but severe as they appear to us, Coming from an All-wise Providence who also supports us, we will say with David, it is better to fall into the Hands of God than that of Man; Happy are we who know there is a God and that God is a Father to us all; and I do firmly believe that the Wicked never will Florish."

A year later (2nd September 1798), when the rejoicings over Nelson's victory of the Nile had been celebrated, she writes: "My dearest Lady Harcourt will be glad to hear of our safe arrival at Weymouth. . . . I hope now to be a little quiet, for of late I have led a life perfectly unknown to me in England. One week really passed in going three times to a Review, to three Dinners, and three Balls, and the fourth day was a breakfast at St. Leonards which was called a God bless you, to which the King also went."

In July (1800?) she was able to feel a little more cheerful, and wrote that "our Fêtes have gone off in a manner truly delightful"[1]—perhaps for the union of Great Britain and Ireland. In arranging fêtes and making personal efforts she felt at home, just as she could cut out hundreds of flannel garments for the unfortunate troops perishing at Walcheren; but of policy and statesmanship she never attained to the least conception.

Charlotte's unpopularity has been already touched

[1] See Note III at end.

upon. Perhaps she, quite as much as Caroline I, might suppose her unpopularity to result from a misunderstanding of her character; but the acquired character which she had, so to speak, adopted became deeply ingrained. The bright and merry Princess of 1761, who made tactful little speeches and gave charming presents in a more charming manner, disappears into a domestic seclusion, becomes a veritable housewife, methodical, economical, and priggish, and when the Queen reemerges, she is silent and repressive, indifferent, and even hard. If she is kindly and benevolent in one society, in another she is critical and severe.

The cold reserve which Charlotte had thought it her duty to acquire, became by habit so natural to her that only with a few intimates such as Mrs. Delany and the Harcourts did she allow herself to break through it. On the other hand, she always felt it a duty to express any disapproval she might feel; her own daughters, Archbishop Cornwallis, duchesses and young ladies, shopkeepers and servants, were alike snubbed when they deserved it. The Archbishop's wife received a definite remonstrance against her invitations to *routs* on Sundays; it was at a Drawing Room that young Lady Charlotte Campbell (daughter of the Duchess of Argyll) was told to "let down a tuck in her petticoat." Miss Burney might be awestricken by the royal reprimand, but it may be doubted whether anything usually resulted but offence. Even the gentle princesses became in time a little restive, and only lost their dread of their mother when old age began to give her a claim on their forbearance.

The Queen had so completely developed this second nature, that her underlying sense of fun and feelings of sympathy could only be detected by intimates. Hence the sharp contrast between the general impression of the Queen's character and the views of those who knew her well.

Several well-qualified critics have left on record their opinion of Queen Charlotte in the latter part of her life, and the portrait they draw bears no great resemblance to the popular version.

Beattie, who was brought by the King's special desire to visit their majesties at court in 1773, gives a little sketch from the outside. "The Queen sat all the while and the King stood, sometimes walking about a little. Her Majesty speaks the English language with surprising elegance and little or nothing of a foreign manner, so that if she were only of the rank of a private gentlewoman one could not help taking notice of her as one of the most agreeable women in the world. Her face is much more pleasing than any of her pictures, and in her smile there is something peculiarly engaging."[1]

It was this peculiarly gracious manner, with a touch of something protective, even maternal, as it seems, in the queenliness, which irritated Lady Sarah Lennox's friends, but certainly captivated experienced, sound-headed Fanny Burney, who was always being "overwhelmed with tender gratitude." Others besides Miss Burney—Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave, or plain Mr. and Mrs. Papendiek —were charmed thereby into an actual zeal for working hard at all hours for a more meagre remuneration than many a nobleman would have thought it proper to offer.

The impression which Charlotte made upon first acquaintance is summed up judicially by Miss Burney as follows:

"The Queen indeed is a most charming woman. She appears to me full of sense and graciousness, mingled with delicacy of mind and liveliness of temper. She speaks English almost perfectly well, with great choice and copiousness of language, though now and then with foreign idiom and frequently with a foreign accent. Her

[1] Beattie (1773) in T. Green's "Memoir of H.R.H. Princess Charlotte Augusta."

manners have an easy dignity with a most engaging simplicity, and she has all that fine high breeding which the mind, not the station gives, of carefully avoiding to distress those who converse with her or studiously removing the embarrassment she cannot prevent. . . . Their behaviour to each other speaks the most cordial confidence and happiness. The King seems to admire as much as he enjoys her conversation, and to covet her participation in everything he either sees or hears. The Queen appears to feel the most grateful regard for him and to make it her chief study to raise his consequence with others, by always marking that she considers herself, though Queen to the nation, only, to him, the first and most obedient of subjects."

Her tactful expression of sympathy was praised by old Lord Guildford. To Mrs. Delany's account of the kindness of their Majesties he responded: "it was no more than I should have expected from them. That the King has one of the best hearts in the world I have known from his birth, and I have known the same to be in the Queen ever since I had the honour of conversing with her out of a Drawing Room . . . two of the best persons I know in the world. I am sure the Queen has compassion for me in my present situation. I took it very kindly of her that she would not give me pain by naming it."

Charlotte was not unlike other persons with a wide acquaintance; her behaviour under very different circumstances might call forth the severest reprobation or the most extravagant adulation. Burke's violent invective was perhaps too wild to be adopted even by his own party; but Brougham, Caroline II's advocate, found that the old Queen "put the feelings of esteem and sympathy to a severe test and left the observer rather scared than attracted by morality."

As an instance of the other extreme, perhaps a letter

to Lady Harcourt[1] from Lady Mount-Edgecumbe may serve, the passionate expressions whereof remind one of the anxieties of Leicester and Burleigh over the small-beer and the temper of Queen Elizabeth:

. . . the most flattering, the most interesting, the most memorable history of our lives, my dearest Lady . . . the great day of our lives, when we were to expect the honor of receiving their Majesties here at ten o'clock. Judge what was our misery when, after some days of the finest bright clear sun that ever was seen, this morning in particular at 7 o'clock it was so hazy and foggy that it was long doubtful whether it shou'd rain; thank God it mended, tho' not to the degree of brightness that cou'd satisfye us, and at ten . . . their Majesties and the three Princesses came by water from Saltram to Mount Edgcumbe.

After landing on green baize and walking over strewn flowers they got into carriages waiting to convey them up the avenue, his Majesty driving the Queen in a little cabriolet with two ponies. As usual they drove or walked to see everything possible, and—

in the course of the long walk down to the sea is a little corner call'd Mrs. Damer's corner, in which are some fine myrtles, and there the Queen display'd the kindness of her heart, and her delicacy in shewing it. She gather'd a bit of myrtle and said, "I will carry this home, and plant it myself in a pot; I will send it home, and always have it, and always keep it." What an Angel's mind, always thinking of what is to make happy! . . . We had dinner at four. Their Majesties were seated in two damask elbow chairs on one side of the table in the hall, in front of the great door; the three princesses in three smaller damask chairs without arms; and, when they were pleased to order Lady Courtown, the two Lady Walde-

[1] Harcourt Papers, iii, 283 *sqq.*

[2] "The Royal Family are all such sailors, and so delighted with the sea that no weather affects them. All the three Ladies Courtown and Waldegrave suffer so much that they are kindly indulg'd and permitted to decline the sea" (Lady Mount-Edgecumbe).

graves, Lord M'E. and myself to sit down, we had stools brought in . . . they did not sit long after dinner, at which, thank God, they appear'd to eat with good appetites.

The royal family left this hospitable castle only towards 7 o'clock. By that time the water was covered with boats "with uplifted oars looking like a wood."

The shores resounded with acclamations, the battery fired, a band of music played, in short nothing cou'd be equal to the situation to us, honor'd, flatter'd, and made happy by every instance of goodness, kindness, and condescension. I do not know how we shall ever learn to be common mortals again, for sure I am that our royal guests were heavenly and were framed to bless mankind; thus their Majesties have left an immortal stamp of glory on this name and place which no time can ever efface. . . .

The opinion of Lady Harcourt herself, the Queen's most intimate friend, is not out of accord with Miss Burney's, but naturally goes deeper. She describes her as very strict and sincere in performing all religious duties, a lover of absolute truth and a despiser of flattery. "She was very sensitive, but always seemed to restrain her feelings, from principle. Her unknown charities were extensive, and to those about her she was endeared by the little delicate attentions by which she seemed always striving to give them pleasure. Her confidence she imparted to few, from a strong fear lest she should be suspected of favouritism."

An over-great deference to the possible criticisms of others appears continually, and seems to have been the cause of the timidity, want of initiative and secretiveness which often rendered her in practice unjust by inducing an attitude of unyielding hardness. It was only with a very few that she could lay aside her suspicions and believe wholeheartedly. "I remember once my saying to her," writes Lady Harcourt, "'I should like to tell *you* something, but pray promise never to let the *Queen*

know it.' She laughed and said, 'Oh no, *She* can have no business with what passes between us in our private, unreserved conversations.'"

Yet so old and tried a servant as Mrs. Harcourt, so amiable and virtuous a young woman as Fanny Burney, had to endure unworthy suspicions the first time that appearances were superficially against them. Charlotte found it difficult to believe in people, although perhaps few queens had so many trusty servants. A merit did not in her eyes excuse a fault, even a host of good services would not cover one presumed neglect.

When the "Diary of Lady Charlotte Campbell"[1] appeared in its first and less trustworthy form, its revelations provoked some renewal of criticisms on several members of the late royal family, which drew a sort of semi-official rejoinder from the able pen of Sir Herbert Taylor.[2] This chivalrous but scrupulously truthful champion of the royal family, who were so well known to him, makes out a strong case for George III, and if, in the other instances, the charges brought are scarcely controverted, at least a milder general impression is produced. With regard to Queen Charlotte, the testimony of Sir Herbert Taylor absolutely rebuts the allegations of avarice or parsimony, but he can go little further, save for general professions of complete respect. She was "a woman of excellent sense," she had "acquired a general knowledge of most subjects which form the ordinary topics of rational conversation, nor did she ever commit herself by what she said." Young as she was when she came to this country, it must be allowed that she clung to a great many German prejudices: "She was indeed

[1] Afterwards Lady C. Bury. The "Diary Illustrative of the Times of George IV, etc.," was first published in 1838. Brougham reviewed "this silly, dull and disgraceful publication" in the "Edinburgh Review," with sufficiently severe additions of his own.

[2] "Remarks on an Article in the Edinburgh Review" (1838).

of a suspicious nature, and her confidence was not readily given, though, on the other hand, not hastily cancelled."

The editor of the interesting "Harcourt Papers," familiar with so great a mass of Charlotte's correspondence, considers that it exhibits chiefly "an anxious desire on the part of the Queen to do what was right, entire self-sacrifice, devotion to her husband and children, cheerfulness under great trials, and extreme reticence in relation to public affairs." Perhaps a regret may be permitted for the sterility of so much virtue, when combined with a devotion to external decorum which became a worship of appearances, and with a dread of self-committal which amounted to the renunciation of almost every opportunity of setting a useful example or exercising wise influence.

Possibly it may be unreasonable to expect of so long-tried a wife and mother more than private duties fulfilled. Unfortunately the dry manner of fulfilment and the example given for so many years of contentment with purely conventional standards could not remain without influence. Queen Charlotte's endorsement of the all-sufficiency of convention, of an arbitrary difference of standard for different sexes and classes, her deliberate blindness to some of the main realities of life, have, not without reason, caused her to be remembered as a striking example of the harm which may be done by a good woman.

AMELIA ELIZABETH CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK

QUEEN OF GEORGE IV

BORN 17TH MAY 1768; MARRIED 8TH APRIL 1795;
DIED 7TH AUGUST 1821

Amelia Elizabeth Caroline of Brunswick
Wife of George IV
from a painting by Sir T. Lawrence in the National Portrait Gallery

AMELIA ELIZABETH CAROLINE

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE

A THOUGHTFUL observer of the conditions of the marriage of Caroline of Brunswick and George, Prince of Wales, might have foretold the inevitable result: a tragedy, sordid and miserable, destitute of almost every element of pathos or dignity.

An impetuous, warm-hearted, superficially clever woman, but ignorant, ill-bred, tactless, and incurably careless, Caroline was mated with a heartless and shameless voluptuary who contracted wedlock reluctantly in order to obtain an increase of income. Ill acquainted with the conventions and demands of society, or even with common good manners, she was despatched to a foreign land without one companion from her home, to find herself helpless in the hands of a brutal husband, and a mother-in-law who apparently resented her very existence and whose severity could be appeased by no submissiveness; and both of these followed with alacrity the path pointed out by the clever and fascinating mistress of the Prince, a woman whose unscrupulous modes of gratifying her hatred made her a byword even in the unscrupulous world of fashionable London.

Caroline's only friend in the entire English court was the King, who indeed showed her kindness, but who had for some years before his son's marriage become accustomed to accept his consort's family and social

arrangements, and who was on such terms with the Prince of Wales that any expression of the father's wishes furnished the strongest reason, in the son's eyes, for adopting an opposite line of conduct. Probably the machinations of the astute Lady Jersey only accelerated the ruin which certainly awaited this ill-omened marriage.

Caroline was through both parents descended from the unhappy Sophia Dorothea, of whose history her own was destined to furnish a sort of travesty, her parents, Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, and Augusta of England, being both great-grandchildren of George I and Sophia Dorothea. George IV was also great-great-grandson of the same ancestors, but he reflected little of George I save his vindictiveness, while in most traits he seems to be a cleverer reproduction of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and, like both ancestors, he possessed a veritable talent for tormenting his victims, father or wife, through their natural affections.

The training which Caroline had received was perhaps the worst which could have been devised for a girl of her temperament. The court of Brunswick was unrestrained and gay, and the princess could not be shut out from scenes of free-and-easy merriment, or even licence, which the Duchess was quite incapable of controlling even had she desired to do so. The Duke was notoriously given to women, and his *maîtresse en titre* was as openly recognized as had been Countess Platen in the days of the first Elector of Hanover. The atmosphere of folly and licence, and the glaring example which the Duke did not even pretend to disguise, must have taught Caroline to suppose that the nature of man was libertine, and that princes need regard appearances no more than morals. If she conceived some contempt for the decorous, long-suffering wives who, with futile repining, submitted as a matter of course to humiliation,

it would hardly be surprising. Decorum only presented itself in the guise of dull, gossiping old ladies devoted to punctilio, and was to be cultivated amid the interminable silly chatter of the Duchess.

No legitimate outlet was provided for Caroline's naturally high spirits. As a rule she spent the long, dreary evenings among the old ladies who attended her mother, bored to death by cards and gossip. Her impetuous temper was apt to find vent in rudeness. "Look!" she cried out on one occasion, when she was set down to a card-table with three of the oldest dames, "here I am so lucky again as to play the whole evening among the Three Graces of the court!" Her strong sense of fun had so little to fasten on that she had found it amusing to plague her old music-master by always touching a particular note with the wrong finger, so as to hear his exclamation. Naturally enough, whenever her father's young officers appeared at the evening receptions (he was a General in the Prussian service), or others visited the court for the sake of amusement, she showed herself extremely frank and easy, enjoying to the utmost the rare intervals of pleasure permitted to her. It appears to have been nobody's concern to teach her how to behave in company, nor was there any very obvious model in Brunswick on whom she could form herself. Even the good-humoured tolerance of the Duke and Duchess, who cared little for etiquette, made their court a bad school for Caroline, and the Duchess herself declared that she feared that their manner of life would "friten young men from wishing a nearer connection with us."[1]

Of other schooling she had little, though until she was considered grown up she was subjected to an unreasoningly severe restraint which, with some arid scraps of learning, made up the mockery of education provided

[1] "Intimate Society Letters," vol. i.

for his daughters by the Duke. Lord Malmesbury caustically described the process: "That very nonsensical [education] which most women receive—one of privation, injunction and menace, to believe no man and never to express what they feel or say what they think, for *all* men are inclined to entrap them and all feelings are improper; this vitiates or *abruti* all women—few escape."[1] This indictment of an eighteenth-century genteel education was under rather than overstated so far as Caroline was concerned.

Such a training had led her elder sister, the first wife of Prince Frederick of Würtemburg, to a career of imprudence and libertinism (as it was rumoured), which had closed in a Baltic fortress. Yet the parents gave no better heed to the headstrong, sharp-tongued Caroline, and jumped at the proposition of marrying her to one of the most dissolute princes in Europe. They did it with their eyes open; the Duke declared that he "entered fully into her future situation—was perfectly aware of the character of the Prince and of the inconveniences that would result, almost with equal ill effect, either from his liking the Princess too much or too little." He kept repeating that she had been *strictly* brought up, and that *restraint* was necessary for her, and suggested that if only the Prince would be severe, keep her shut up and make her afraid of him, all would be well.

This strictness had been of a narrow type. At the age of thirteen Caroline was not allowed by her governess to look out of the window. She was seldom or never allowed to dine with her mother, and might not come downstairs if there was any company. "If she did appear her eyes were full of tears and her mother . . . bid her go on crying for it was only her naughtiness that made her so

[1] "Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, first Earl of Malmesbury," vol. iii, p. 196. The quotations which follow are taken from the same volume.

passionate."[1] Of her brothers she saw very little; to her father, in spite of his harshness, she was devoted.

The English envoy who found himself charged by the Duke with such curious recommendations was the first Earl of Malmesbury, a skilful diplomatist in charge of a responsible mission in Germany where Pitt hoped to form a wide alliance against the new and belligerent French Republic. The Duke of Brunswick had just disappointed the English King and Minister by refusing to accept the command of the allied forces, for fear of offending Prussian sensitiveness, when Malmesbury received orders from George III to proceed to Brunswick and ask for Princess Caroline's hand on behalf of the Prince of Wales, to draw up and sign the marriage treaty, act as proxy for the Prince, and conduct the Princess to England. No preliminary inquiries were made, and if Queen Charlotte's German correspondents had, as is very possible, informed her of anything derogatory to the proposed bride, the King made no use of her knowledge. He had come to one of his sudden, despotic resolutions, and settled the matter out of hand.

Malmesbury at once obeyed his instructions, and found himself the recipient of the anxious confidences of half the Brunswick court, delighted by the honour but very nervous as to the result. He was quite equal to the situation; listened becomingly to Duke, Duchess, and Mistress, snubbed the illnatured severely (one old lady remarked that though the Princess was quite grown up she had not yet reached years of discretion), lectured the Princess very sensibly, and put the whole down in his Diary.

He found the Duchess "all good-nature and he, as usual, civil but reserved and stiff. The Princess Carolina much embarrassed on my first being presented to her—pretty face—good hand—tolerable teeth, but going—fair

[1] Duchess of Würtemberg to Lady Elgin, in Lady R. Weigall's "Life of the Princess Charlotte."

hair and light eyebrows, good bust—short, with what the French call *des épaules impertinentes*. *Vastly happy with her future expectations*. The Duchess full of nothing else—talks incessantly."

He quickly discovered for himself that the selected bride's sole cultivated taste was for music; that her cramped education had left her so childishly ignorant of the realities of life that she seemed positively unaware of the value of money, and that, kind hearted as she was towards poverty and distress, she could readily be deceived by any specious appearance. She showed her want of knowledge and reflection in a "missish" way which annoyed the ambassador, making sudden friendships upon an hour's acquaintance and calling such ladies "*mon cœur*," "*ma chère*." She seemed to have no notion of dignity. And, indeed, it would have been odd if, among such surroundings, she had acquired any.

After the lapse of six days Malmesbury set it down that "Princess Caroline improves on acquaintance, is gay and cheerful with good sense." But he perceived that she had a world of wisdom to acquire before she could become a fit Princess of Wales, the worst of all being that the elementary training of the nursery had been neglected, and that Caroline was actually slovenly in dress and person. Ladies of high station at the English court, to say nothing of the French, were occasionally taxed with neglect of this sort in a tone of comic disgust, but the Anglo-Hanoverian royal family were especially "nice" in that respect, and Malmesbury not only addressed a firm parental exhortation to the Princess, rebuking her for "piquing herself on dressing quick," but made friends with a sensible lady, Madame von der Busche, and got her to amplify his counsel. "Madame Busche executes her commission well and the Princess comes out the next day well washed all over."

Malmesbury's next difficulty was how to convey the

Princess safely to England. The Prince of Wales wrote to bid him start immediately; but the war had begun and French troops were fast penetrating into Holland, so that the usual overland journey to the short crossing was dangerous, while for a longer voyage the escort of the British fleet would be no mere ceremony, for the Dutch fleet seemed very likely soon to become a French one, and the passage might be disputed. All was made ready, however, and the formal ceremony of marriage was performed on 3rd December, Malmesbury acting as the Prince's proxy. "Duke answers very well—rather embarrassed — Duchess overcome, in tears — Princess Caroline much affected but replies distinctly and well." The marriage treaty was drawn up in English and Latin, the Ambassador objecting to French, the natural language of the Brunswick court, as the tongue of the common foe. But as the British fleet could not yet reach the port of Stade, it would have been useless to set forth at once, and the delay gave opportunity for further training of the bride.

The Duke, in a sort of forlorn hope that much admonition might supply the lack of an education, now poured wise advice upon his daughter: "Not to ask questions and above all not to be free in giving opinions of persons and things aloud . . . never to shew any jealousy of the Prince, and that, if he had any *goûts*, not to notice them."

Again and again the anxious father besought Malmesbury to advise and watch over his daughter, and the Duke's mistress, no less anxious, came to him with similar prayers. The Princess, she said, was so much afraid of her father, who was very severe, that she would listen more attentively to Lord Malmesbury. She declared that it would be necessary to be very strict with Caroline, who was neither clever nor ill-disposed, but "of a temper easily wrought on and had *no tact*." The

Prince ought at first to keep her to a private life, for she had always been restrained and watched, and if she found herself launched on the world in full liberty she would never be able to keep her feet. Not that she was bad at heart, she had never done anything wrong, but she always spoke before she thought and opened herself too freely and without reticence, so that even in the little court of Brunswick she was credited with meanings or intentions which she never entertained: "and what will it be in England, where she will be surrounded by clever intriguing women into whose arms she will fling herself, if the Prince lets her lead the dissipated life of London? And they will trick her into saying whatever they want, for she will talk without knowing the meaning of what she says. Besides she is so vain, and though she has wit, no depth—her head will be turned if she is courted and the Prince spoils her. . . . I am afraid of the Queen; the Duchess here, who lives thinking aloud when she thinks at all, does not like the Queen and she has talked too much about it to her daughter, and yet her happiness depends on standing well with her." It was Queen Charlotte, too, whom the Duke feared. He and his wife had enough knowledge of her and of her court to suspect that she would give little help to a foolish or awkward daughter-in-law. They had intended that Caroline should have with her one German lady, her ex-governess, staid Mademoiselle Rosenzweit, but the Prince had vetoed this arrangement, to their great dismay, and Caroline would be left unaided to cope with the difficult foreign tongue.

The Princess herself behaved extremely well during the days of enforced waiting. She took her father's lecture very properly, and paid heed to Malmesbury's pithier and oft repeated injunctions, which were of the gravest import, and most judiciously expressed. She readily understood that she was not to expect only

pleasure but duties perhaps difficult enough to fulfil. The idea of a duty to her future subjects indeed appealed to her, new as it was: what did dash her spirits was a letter to her mother from George III (written in French), in which he expresses his hopes that his niece "will not be too lively but lead a sedentary and quiet life."

It was at this moment that Malmesbury learned from an English visitor "that Lady [Jersey] was very well with the Queen; that she went frequently to Windsor, and appeared as a sort of favourite.—This, if true, most strange and bodes no good—Sat near Princess Caroline at supper; I advise her to avoid familiarity, to have no confidantes, to avoid giving any opinion; to approve, but not to admire excessively; to be perfectly silent on politics and party; to be very attentive and respectful to the Queen; to endeavour, at all events, to be well with her." Admirable advice, had it only been in his volatile pupil's nature to follow it!

Caroline had already heard the name of Lady Jersey, and she asked her Mentor whether Lady Jersey was an *intriguante*. The Mentor adroitly turned his reply into a hint not to be too familiar with her English ladies; she might be affable without forgetting she was Princess of Wales. She next alarmed him by saying that she wished to be popular, and was earnestly assured that popularity was never attained by familiarity: it belonged to respect, and would be gained by a just mixture of dignity and affability, whereof Queen Charlotte was a model. Caroline —not sufficiently well informed to retort that if this was Queen Charlotte's method of attaining popularity it had been singularly unsuccessful—owned that she was afraid of the Queen: she was sure she would be jealous and do her harm. Of herself she said: "I am determined never to appear jealous, I know the Prince is *léger* and am prepared on this point." Malmesbury could only declare,

what he may have tried to hope, that the Prince could be won by her charms and her good-humour, and by "softness, enduring, and caresses." His encouragement was discounted by the arrival of an anonymous letter to the Duchess warning the Princess to be on her guard against Lady Jersey. In vain did the envoy declare that it must have emanated from some disappointed milliner or angry maid-servant. The Duke was perturbed, and the Duchess not only showed the letter to her daughter, but talked about it to everybody.

The English royal family were not all strangers to the court of Brunswick. The Duke and Duchess of York had paid visits, and others of the princes, of whom Caroline said that she liked the Duke of Clarence best, and it flashed across Malmesbury that it was he who had originally suggested the Princess as a bride for his eldest brother "with a view to plague the Duke and Duchess of York, whom he hates and whom the Prince no longer likes." Caroline and the sedate Duchess of York had taken no liking to each other, and it was hardly to be supposed that they would become very friendly in England.

The Duchess's excitement over her daughter's splendid marriage was the keener because she had never expected it. All the young princesses of Germany, she said, had learned English in hopes of becoming Princess of Wales, but "she never would give the idea to Caroline." Nor did the Princess ever master the English language sufficiently to speak or write it without considerable, even ludicrous, lapses from good grammar and good taste.

At length, at the close of December, Holland being occupied by a strong allied army, it was thought safe to set out on the western road, and Caroline could begin to enjoy a little happiness in being really Princess of Wales. Her mother was to chaperone her until she could be given

into the charge of her English ladies, and on the 30th they started, the Duke to the last imploring Malmesbury to be a second father to his child.

Hurt though the good folk of Hanover were that their King-Elector had vouchsafed to them no official intimation of the wedding of their Electoral Prince, they nevertheless paid all the loyal service possible to the new Electoral Princess. The regency and court mustered in full force at Herrenhausen, and Caroline partook in their midst of a splendid state banquet which probably afforded her unmixed pleasure. Passing by triumphal arches and devices of "God save the King," the Princess drove rapidly along the excellent road to Osnabrück. But the new year opened with the famous frost which trapped the Dutch fleet in the ice, to be taken by French cavalry, and this calamitous event, and the certainty that Stade harbour was as fast frozen against the entry of the English fleet, kept the party a week in the Duke of York's hospitable capital. The frost giving, they started once more, but only to be stopped, after two days' progress, by ill-boding letters from the seat of war. In some anxiety, for all night they heard distant cannonading, Malmesbury hurried his precious charge back to Hanover on 24th January; and there they were obliged to remain for two months, for the enemy were on the watch for so valuable a prize, and the English fleet, by no means in undisputed control of the narrow seas, could neither secure an uninterrupted passage, nor hazard the Princess's safety by risking an action while convoying her. Accordingly the ships had put back to the English coast, apparently to wait until chance should remove the Franco-Dutch fleet elsewhere.

This humiliating position was improved, so far as the Princess and Malmesbury were concerned, by the next catastrophe. The Duke of York's unsuccessful attempts to carry out impossible orders had resulted in his defeat,

and a fleet must be despatched to bring home the remnants of his starving troops. The Prince of Wales wrote to direct that his bride "should be in a manner smuggled over into this country." The men-of-war detailed to escort her could slip away from the rest, make Stade, take the Princess on board, and convey her to England before the plan was suspected, while, as a blind, the royal yachts remained in the Thames, ostensibly waiting to sail.

In the meantime the diligent mentor had been making excellent use of the long delay for the further education of his princess in the rudiments of good manners; he rebuked her for laughing at her mother, showed his disapproval of her inquisitive interest in personal tittle-tattle, and impressed on her the necessity for making no distinctions of party other than those made by the King and Queen, a hard saying, truly, to the wife of the Prince of Wales. In one branch of instruction Caroline proved an apt pupil. She had never as yet been allowed any opportunity of showing or witnessing the exercise of charity or generosity. Malmesbury supplied her with funds for this purpose, and as Hanover was thronged with poverty-stricken French emigrants it was easy to find deserving recipients of her bounty. He was gratified by the evident pleasure with which she not ungracefully bestowed her largesse, but was a little startled next day to find her pressing a handful of gold coins upon himself, as a kind of "tip."

The envoy's final verdict was that Princess Caroline had quick parts, but no judgement, was moved by the first impulse, and attracted or disgusted by superficial appearances, that she had "some natural but no acquired morality, and no strong innate notions of its value and necessity, warm feelings and nothing to counter-balance them." There was no modifying his previously expressed opinion that "with a *steady* man she would do vastly

well, but with one of a different description there are great risks."

At length Commodore Jack Payne, one of the Prince's special cronies, brought his ships to Stade, and landed Mrs. Harcourt,[1] sole official conductress of the royal bride. The Duchess of Brunswick, very glad to be released from duty, took her leave quickly, the Duke made the short journey from Brunswick to say a final farewell to his daughter and a final prayer to Malmesbury, and four days' drive brought the travellers into Stade early on 28th March. Caroline's spirits began to rise. The burghers under arms loyally lined their streets as she and her escort passed through, but almost the whole day was spent in laboriously rowing down the river to the point where a man-of-war's barge was waiting. As soon as she stepped on board the royal standard was hoisted and a royal salute thundered from the great ships further out, whose imposing appearance filled the Princess with delight. It was seven in the evening when she reached the "Jupiter" and was handed up the side of the flagship by a middy.

"Impossible to be more cheerful, more *accommodante*, more everything that is pleasant than the Princess—no difficulty, no childish fears, all good-humour"; and the sailors were as much pleased by her frank manners and admirable temper as she was with them and their noble vessel. She possessed that natural ease on board ship which almost seems to be a peculiar gift of English kings and queens; indeed, her fondness for the sea, like her love of little children, was a native taste which never left her.

Mrs. Harcourt avowed herself much delighted with the bride, in whom she found some resemblance to Mrs.

[1] On whom Malmesbury's somewhat cryptic judgement is, "She good and very right [*i.e.*, as to the "politics" in the royal family] but a very mean courtier to a fulsome degree."

Fitzherbert when young. "All openness of heart and has not a shadow of pride . . . perfectly void of art or design," she writes. "The Princess's sweet temper and affability of manners has charmed and delighted everyone; and all the officers of the ship declare they should have had more trouble with any London lady than her Royal Highness has given. She is always contented and always in good humour, and shews such pleasant, unaffected joy at the idea of her prospect in life that it does one's heart good to see anybody so happy. . . . I think everybody will be pleased with the little treasure the 'Jupiter' brings to England."[1] But Mrs. Harcourt was too cautious to reply to any of Caroline's questions about the court and Lady Jersey, saying that she had been away too long to know anything of the present state of affairs.

Three days of smooth sailing over a sea like glass, in a veritable party of pleasure, varied by the excitement of chasing some French privateers, brought the wedding-party off Orfordness, where a fog caught them, and they waited for two days, until on Good Friday (3rd April) it cleared and they sailed past Harwich, decked with flags, past scores of saluting ships, and next day entered the Thames, both shores being lined with crowds, and all the shipping in the river saluting. The sight, under a clear blue sky, was beautiful in the extreme. At Gravesend a royal yacht was waiting, which conveyed the little party to Greenwich about noon, and Caroline's brief week of happiness was over.

There was no one to meet the Princess, who was led into Greenwich hospital to wait for news or directions. Seven messengers arrived, one after the other, but no escort, and no word when the wedding was to take place. At length, after an hour's rather nervous waiting, arrived

[1] Harcourt Papers, vol. iv, p. 2.

two or three royal coaches, with a slender suite consisting of Lady Jersey, Mrs. Aston, and Lord Claremont. Lady Jersey had not been ready to start at the appointed time. Her ladyship instantly "found fault with the dress of the Princess, though Mrs. Harcourt had taken great pains about it," and to Malmesbury's annoyance insisted on attiring her Royal Highness in a gown she had brought for the purpose and in which, it seems, her appearance was less pleasing, especially with the addition of some rouge to Caroline's fresh colour. Next, Lady Jersey began to hint that she could not ride with her back to the horses, thus endeavouring to induce the Princess to invite her to sit by her side. Malmesbury gave Caroline no chance of giving the expected invitation; he firmly expressed the pleasure it would give him to see her ladyship in the coach sent for Claremont and himself, while Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Harcourt accompanied the Princess, so that Lady Jersey had to give in and sit in her proper place. And thus began the journey to disaster.

Quickly as they drove, for they reached St. James's at 2.30, Caroline yet had time to forget the whole of Lord Malmesbury's counsels and to give to Lady Jersey, about whom she had, at all events, learned Commodore Payne's plain-spoken opinions, a trump card which could be played with fatal effect. She was quick enough to see that this brilliant, lovely, redoubtable little woman, of whom she had already heard so many sinister reports, regarded her with something like disdain, and, probably with a girlish idea of self-assertion, of showing herself no naïve country girl but a woman of the world too, she actually talked to Lady Jersey of her own past experiences, of her knowledge of the tender passion, and confided to her a tale of having once been deeply in love with some young German, whom it was, of course, impossible for her to marry.

At St. James's nobody was on the watch. They entered the palace, Malmesbury notified their arrival to the King and the Prince of Wales, and Mrs. Harcourt to the Queen, and the Prince came at once. "I, according to the established etiquette," says Malmesbury, "introduced, no one else being in the room, the Princess Caroline to him. She very properly, in consequence of my saying to her it was the right mode of proceeding, attempted to kneel to him. He raised her (gracefully enough) and embraced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling me to him said, 'Harris, I am not well, pray get me a glass of brandy.' I said, 'Sir, had you not better have a glass of water?' Upon which he, much out of humour, said with an oath, '*No*; I will go directly to the Queen,' and away he went."

Persistent rumour attributed this calamitous beginning to an odious trick on the part of Lady Jersey, nor is there anything unlikely in the supposition.

Caroline, left alone during the brief dialogue, was in a state of amazement, and on Malmesbury's rejoining her, she exclaimed: "Mon Dieu! Est-ce que le Prince est toujours comme cela? Je le trouve très gros et nullement aussi beau que son portrait."

Malmesbury tried to pretend that the Prince was flurried by the emotions of a first interview and would be quite different in the evening, when she would meet him at dinner, and he escaped from further questions to attend the King. His Majesty was absorbed in politics, and asked but one question about his daughter-in-law: "Is she good-humoured?" Malmesbury could truly reply that in the most trying moments he had never seen her otherwise. "I am glad of it," the King responded, and that was all. At the dinner which followed, the suite beheld with dismay the flippant, rude behaviour of the Princess—"affecting raillery and wit and throwing out

coarse, vulgar hints about Lady [Jersey] who was present." In the moment of shock Caroline had forgotten every precept, the Prince's openly-shown disgust had stung her to what she regarded as self-defence; to his bad manners she retorted in kind, and he, accustomed to possess the monopoly of rudeness in the royal family, became more and more disgusted.

During the two days which elapsed before the wedding the Princess did not make any good impression upon the royal family, nor did her first lady-in-waiting scruple to carry to the Prince most unpleasant reports of his bride's manners and conversation. It was currently reported that she even put spirits into her royal mistress's beverage, that the Queen might believe her to be intemperate. Upon those not immediately about her, however, she made a pleasant impression. A crowd assembled to see her, and she showed herself at a window and "bowed exceedingly to the people . . . till the Prince shut the window and made excuses of her being fatigued. Everybody speaks most favourably of her face as most pleasing, though with too much rouge. She is plump and by no means tall."[1]

Something of the true state of affairs became evident to those whose rank occasioned their presence at the wedding ceremony, which was performed on the evening of 8th April in the Chapel Royal at St. James's—a departure from the custom which obtained at the time of using one of the apartments in lieu of the chapel.

The Princess behaved "gravely and decently" during the ceremony. She had manifested the greatest joy as the Duke of Clarence led her, attended by her four bridesmaids, to the chapel and chattered merrily to him as she waited by the altar for the Prince. The latter came supported (literally) by the Dukes of Roxburghe and Bedford,

[1] H. W., 2692 (xv).

who could with difficulty guide his intoxicated steps. Archbishop Moore, manifestly ill at ease, lowered his book after the solemn question whether there were any impediment to lawful matrimony and looked earnestly at the King and the Prince, whereupon the latter was observed to be "much affected" and shed his usual tears. In the middle of the ceremony the Prince suddenly rose unsteadily to his feet and the Archbishop paused, but the King by whisper and pressure induced his son to kneel down again. The Archbishop actually repeated twice the injunction to forsake all other but his wife.[1]

In the Drawing Room had gathered a throng of courtiers to see the royalties, each attended by his or her special procession, come back from the chapel. They passed almost in silence, the princesses with difficulty squeezing their hoops through the narrow passage left for them. "The Prince looked like Death and full of confusion as if he wished to hide himself from the looks of the whole world. I think he is much to be pitied. The bride, on the contrary, appeared in the highest of spirits, when she passed by us first, smiling and nodding to every one." After thus showing themselves bride and bridegroom went away to Carlton House, whence, on the next day, "a whole coach full of cake was sent about . . . the Queen breakfasted with them. The Prince took a solitary ride afterwards. What an odd wedding!"[2]

Not till long afterwards did the Princess reveal that her miserable husband was for most of the bridal night dead drunk. She had already realized his relations with Lady Jersey: "The first moment I saw my *futur* and Lady J. together I knew how it all was, and I said to myself, 'Oh, very well! I took my *partie* . . ."

Probably it was no more than she had expected and

[1] Wraxall, on the authority of the dowager Duchesses of Dorset and Rutland, who were present.

[2] Lady Maria Stuart, "Jerningham Letters," vol. i, pp. 74 *et seq.*

she had steeled herself against jealousy, but she had not reckoned on the incessant insult and espionage to which the Countess subjected her, or upon the Prince's total neglect of decent appearances. When at the end of the week they went to Windsor, Lady Jersey drove with them, and a few days later, at the country villa of Kempshot, she was actually the only lady besides the Princess, who found herself among a company of rough and drunken men, who used to snore on the sofas with their boots on.[1] Caroline was no match for her husband's clever, spiteful, and witty mistress. It is credibly stated that the Countess, anxious to oust Mrs. Fitzherbert, had by no means discouraged the Prince's marriage with his cousin, feeling assured of holding her own with so unskilful a rival, but that, affecting at all events a lover's jealousy, she had actually induced the Prince to make a solemn vow before the bride arrived, that he would never treat his ostensible wife otherwise than with contumely, so that it might be sufficiently manifest who held the real empire over his heart.

Chance or design almost at once placed in Lady Jersey's hands an instrument of ruining the Princess of Wales with the Queen and the princesses. Caroline wrote some indiscreetly confidential letters home, which she could not entrust to the ordinary post. A certain Dr. Randolph announcing that he was about to journey to Berlin *via* Brunswick and offering his services, these letters were given to him to deliver. He changed his plans, and returned the Princess's letters, not to herself, however, but, with ostensible correctness, to her first lady-in-waiting. Lady Jersey carried them straight to the Queen, who read them. The German equivalent of "old Snuffy" is said to have been the epithet applied to her Majesty—with a good deal else much worse, and

[1] Sir G. Elliot.

thenceforward the Queen treated her daughter-in-law as one in condign disgrace.

"She drives always alone, sees no company but old people put on her list by the Queen, Lady Jersey, etc. She goes nowhere but airings in Hyde Park. The Prince uses her unpardonably." So the grave lawyer Charles Abbot noted in his diary.

The appalling disillusionment which had befallen her Caroline met with courage and with reticence. Talkative as she usually was, she appears to have been almost silent upon the grave events of her life, on the birth of Princess Charlotte, and on her death, and on her husband's original ill-treatment. Two certainties, at least, can be gathered: first, that she comported herself with perfect self-control in public, scorning to exploit the popular good will which she perceived to be at once lavished upon her, abstaining from any attempt at intrigue among the royal family or their satellites, and holding herself absolutely aloof from any political interest, and, secondly, that her high spirit and sharp tongue provoked the Prince continually. There was nothing of the soft, enduring, caressing creature that the Prince might have liked in Caroline.

"One of the civil things his Royal Highness did at first was to find fault with my shoes, and as I was very young and lively in those days, I told him to make me a better pair and bring them to me." The Prince asserted himself by galling interference. One day Caroline found her dining-room denuded of nearly all furniture but a couple of common chairs. On another she was ordered to give back to the Prince a pair of pearl bracelets given to her as part of her wedding jewels, and these she soon saw Lady Jersey wearing. (The Prince always maintained that the Princess's jewels were really his property, and on her death he seized them, as he had done his sister Amelia's, and sold them.)

In addition to the neglect of her husband, the coldness of the Queen and princesses and the flouts of Lady Jersey, Caroline had to submit to an almost private life, mewed up among persons most distasteful to her, and almost deprived of amusements, for the Prince suddenly adopted a pose of economy.

He loudly declared himself cheated of the bribe which had enticed him into wedlock, for the financial settlement made by Pitt did not realize his expectations. Parliament had once before paid £160,000 to clear the Prince from debt, and now would only grant £54,000 to finish Carlton House and buy jewels for the Princess besides an increase of income which brought his annual revenue to some £140,000. But herewith, very meanly in the Prince's opinion, Parliament insisted that £25,000 a year should be earmarked for liquidating his enormous debts —now said to amount to £639,890. Upon so miserable a pittance his Royal Highness declared himself unable to maintain a princely establishment, and he signalized his reduction to honest penury by suddenly dismissing workmen, servants, and suite, cancelling subscriptions and public engagements, selling horses, and confining himself wholly to such society, amusements, and vices as were truly congenial. These proceedings only added to his unpopularity, for he had tried the trick before (in 1786) when he had appointed four of his special confidants "commissioners" for his income and his debts, and it was hardly likely that his unlucky creditors would see more of their money on this occasion.

Caroline was probably deprived of her maids of honour at this time, and only four ladies were retained for her— Ladies Jersey, Townshend, Cholmondeley, and Carnarvon. Nor could the expectation of the birth of her child give much solace, extremely fond of children though she had always been, and desirous of possessing them herself, since she was given to understand that her child

would belong only nominally to its mother. A letter to a German friend, written at some time in the summer of 1795, gives a pathetic impression of the Princess's isolation.

I do not know how I shall be able to bear the hours of loneliness only I trust in the Almighty. The Queen seldom visits me, and my sisters-in-law show me the same sympathy. But I admire the character of the English, and nothing can be more flattering than the reception which is given me when I appear in public. A little while ago I was very much pleased by a visit to the chief theatre. It was an impressive sight, and when all the company began to sing the national hymn I thought I had never seen anything more sublime. But why do I talk of such things! I am surrounded by miserable, evil minds, and everything I do is put in a bad light.

The Countess is still here. I hate her and I know she feels the same towards me. My husband is wholly given up to her and so you can easily guess the rest. . . . The Prince wishes for a son, but I do not mind, for according to the English laws the parents will have little to do with them [children] in the future. I am so afraid of what is coming.[1]

On one point only did Caroline oppose her husband's will; after enduring Lady Jersey for some months she informed the Prince that she must consult her own dignity, and when he was not present would not consent to dine with Lady Jersey. The Prince was angry, but the Princess held her ground, and shortly after, realizing that the King had some sympathy for her, a sympathy which he showed by frequently coming to visit her, she begged him to exert his authority to remove Lady Jersey from the post which enabled her incessantly to thwart or spy upon her nominal mistress; and George III in the spring of 1796 did thus relieve her from an intolerable insult, perhaps an actual danger. During a sojourn at Brighton, the Prince's favourite residence, Lady Jersey

[1] Quoted in Vehse, Höfe d. Hauses Braunschweig.

had behaved with insolence so open that the Prince's new secretary and favourite, Tyrwhitt, ventured on a remonstrance, with the sole result of damaging his own credit, for the Countess fainted away from sensibility, and the Prince, arriving in the nick of time, was furious. Lady Jersey's place was filled in July by Lady Willoughby d'Eresby, wife of a courtier of the Prince, the wealthy and recently ennobled *parvenu* Lord Gwydir,[1] and the place of Mrs. Pelham, also dismissed by the Princess for sufficiently good reasons, by Mrs. Lisle. Both were women of high character, and it should be noted that they remained always loyal to Caroline.

[1] She was the eldest daughter and heiress of the Duke and Duchess of Ancaster.

CHAPTER II

THE SEPARATION—MOTHER AND DAUGHTER—(1796-1811)

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE was born on 7th January 1796, and of course became at once the central interest of her mother's life. Caroline had always manifested a passionate love of little children. On her walks, at home, she would always stop to fondle and talk to any child she met; it remained through life her ruling passion, and on her own baby she absolutely doted.

A few weeks after the child's christening Caroline suddenly received an intimation from the Prince that he did not intend ever again to treat her as his wife, and that she was at liberty to make any arrangements she chose for her future life. Outwardly calm, she returned a message that she would prefer to have his Royal Highness's wishes signified to her in writing, that she might be sure to understand them. No interview took place between husband and wife; these negotiations were conducted through Lord Cholmondeley, Chamberlain to their Royal Highnesses, whose wife, a daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Ancaster, was one of the Princess's ladies.

The Prince's letter, if cold, was sufficiently dignified. "... Our inclinations are not in our power," he wrote, "nor should either of us be held answerable to the other because nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is however in our power; let our intercourse therefore be restricted to that and I will distinctly subscribe to the condition which you

required through Lady Cholmondeley, that, even in the event of any accident happening to my daughter, which I trust Providence in his mercy will avert, I shall not infringe the terms of the restriction by proposing at any period a connexion of a more particular nature. I shall now finally close this disagreeable correspondence, trusting that, as we have completely explained ourselves to each other, the rest of our lives will be passed in uninterrupted tranquillity."

To this the Princess's answer, in French, is so well expressed,[1] that it is probable she obtained assistance from one of her ladies. She took care to make her position clear, however.

". . . I should have returned no answer to your letter if it had not been conceived in such terms as to make it doubtful whether this arrangement proceeds from you or from me; and you are aware that the credit of it belongs to you alone. The letter which you announce to me as the last obliges me to communicate to the King, as to my Sovereign and my Father, both your avowal and my answer. You will find inclosed the copy of my letter to the King.[2] I apprise you of it that I may not incur the slightest reproach of duplicity from you. . . ." (dated 6th May 1796).

Great was Caroline's relief on receiving the Prince's written determination to live apart from her. "I had it and vas free," she afterwards exclaimed to Lady Charlotte Campbell, "I left Carlton House and went to Charlton. Oh! how happy I was! Everybody blamed me but I never repented me of dis step. Oh mine God what I have suffered! Luckily I had a spirit or I never should have outlived it."

At Charlton, near Blackheath, the Princess had a small villa, but it was agreed, at the instance of George III,

[1] See "The Book" (1813).

[2] Never, however, made public.

that she should keep her apartments at Carlton House and have free access to the baby princess, who had to be left there under the care of her nurses and of the dowager Countess of Elgin, Governess-in-Chief, who was appointed in January 1797, but did not live at Carlton House, whither she used to come daily to see the child. Accordingly Caroline was able to devote several days a week to her baby, of whom from the first the Prince took very little notice, though he might occasionally compose a touching letter about her to his eldest sister in Würtemberg, and interfered at once if he fancied that the Princess was obtaining any authority or influence in the nursery. For though he spent much more of his time at Brighton or Windsor than at Carlton House, and never met the Princess, he paid a morbid kind of attention to her doings. Her little household principally consisted of servants sent from his own, and her proceedings were certainly reported to him.

The separation of the Prince and Princess naturally caused a great stir, and little doubt existed in the minds of most where blame should be imputed. Caroline's appearance at the Opera, towards the end of May, occasioned a strong demonstration, "much stronger than even the papers represented. The Princess at first retired, but the Duke of Leeds persuaded her to stand up and curtsey. She did, and then all the house rose, and then every woman as well as man in every part clapped incessantly, and repeated it, and it was well *two* other persons [the Prince and Lady Jersey] were not there as insults were loudly declared to be intended, and on their not appearing, God save the *King* was called for and sung with the same view. Their Majesties were not there, or a third person [the Queen] might have heard something unpleasant, as the town has got a notion of too much favouring Lady Jersey at least."[1]

[1] H. W., 2997 (xv).

A few days later the same observer notes: "The universal applause was repeated on Tuesday at the Opera, but nothing offensive heard. I think *her* appearance well advised; her absence would have fallen on her husband and been imputed to him; to suppose that she sought popularity would have offended nobody but him, which at this moment could not have made the case worse."[1]

The King was endeavouring to procure a reconciliation, and thought that the removal of Lady Jersey from Carlton House (at the end of May) might make some compromise possible. "I think," writes Walpole to Miss Berry (25th June), "that you may chance to hear of the contents of a letter, or perchance see a copy of it in the newspapers, from an affectionate father-in-law to a tender daughter-in-law, acquainting her with the dutiful submission of the prodigal son, who *consents* to the removal of the mote out of his lady's eye—further this deponent saith not." But the hope was vain. The Prince did not intend to be reconciled with his wife. "The Reconciliation of the Princess remains suspended," writes another correspondent; "it is a dreadful scandal and would [*sic*] very much to be wished that it was over."[2]

In point of fact, as experience was to prove, Caroline was in a most awkward position. By his letter of dismissal the Prince had repudiated her; yet, as no separation could be pronounced she was in no way free from his control. Her establishment was reckoned a part of his. He could, and at the first opportunity did, forbid her to enter his house or to see their child, whom the law left wholly in his power. He showed his dislike of her by refusing to visit any place where there was a possibility of meeting her, and though at first she endeavoured to act as though unconscious of insult and

[1] H. W., 2998 (xv).

[2] "Jerningham Letters," 21st June 1796.

unaffected by what had occurred, and even arranged a visit to Brighton in the summer of 1796, she soon became unwilling to be the cause of an unpleasant scene, and kept herself much retired. Her time, indeed, was at first sufficiently occupied with Princess Charlotte and with a good deal of necessary consideration for her own household arrangements. Miss Hayman, installed as sub-governess in 1797 to the little Charlotte, describes the Princess of Wales as coming constantly to the palace, and was quite won—as were most of Caroline's attendants—by her warm-hearted openness and her genuine kindness. She was always full of chat about dress, lace, novels, or personal gossip; she maintained very little etiquette, and she was passionately fond of her beautiful child, whose vivacity and bonny looks she loved to extol and to show off whenever there were witnesses.

When the Prince went to Brighton for the summer of 1797 he left little Charlotte behind at Carlton House, and Caroline ventured to write to him to remind him that he had promised that she might have Charlotte at Charlton, and to beg that this promise might be now fulfilled, so that the child (now eighteen months old) might not spend the entire summer in town among her attendants. No answer was returned to the letter, a favourite manœuvre of the Prince's, and Charlotte had to stay in town all the summer, and might only once spend an afternoon at Charlton, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's own birthday, which his discarded wife dutifully celebrated by giving a concert to an assemblage of dignified persons, to whom she had the satisfaction of showing the little Princess, who played by herself in the midst of the "circle" for quite an hour.

Caroline had to learn, like others, that in spite of the Prince's aptitude for expressing admirable sentiments on paper there was no relation between his promises and his performance.

In the autumn Miss Hayman, devoted to her little charge as she had become, was abruptly dismissed by the Prince. It is suggested[1] that his sense of decorum was probably shocked by the Princess's "confidential and often imprudent gossip" with the sub-governess. This is a good instance of the kind of assumption usual with even moderate writers upon the subject of the Prince and his wife. No doubt the Princess showed but little dignity, she loved to waive ceremony. What really annoyed the Prince was the knowledge that the sub-governess, instead of placing difficulties in the way of the mother seeing her child, as the governesses had broad hints to do, was on a friendly footing with her. As Miss Hayman observes that the child's apartments were so far away from the Prince's that she herself seldom was aware whether his Royal Highness was at Carlton House or not, it would hardly seem that Caroline's occasional presence could annoy him, or that she could learn much news of his own amours and extravagances from Miss Hayman. The Princess endeavoured to make up to Miss Hayman for her dismissal by taking her into her own household, where, as keeper of the private purse, she long remained.

Caroline's principal anxiety in the year 1798 was the dreaded inoculation for smallpox which Charlotte had to undergo. The child had a very severe attack, though she recovered safely. In after years the Prince characteristically abused the Princess of Wales for not taking better care of her daughter at this time: it was due to her carelessness that Charlotte had retained a mark from the illness (which Miss Knight, however, could not see). He himself, he averred, had been constantly watching beside the cradle.

That Caroline should prove a judicious mother could

[1] By Lady Rose Weigall.

hardly be expected. She was too fond of displaying the child's attractiveness and too prone to spoil her. But the lonely little girl, kept strictly from any companionship, and from the first trained with severity rather than tact, was more in need of affection than anything else. The Queen of Würtemberg's judicious suggestions, as, that she should be allowed to see other children, should not have her hands tied or be often severely scolded, should not have so great a number of teachers, or be taught (at the age of five) to play music and recite French verses in company, cause a regret that the little Princess could not have been brought up under this one member of the royal family who seems to have had any concern for her as a human child; but that Charlotte in childhood was passionate, vain, or a tomboy was hardly to be put down to her mother, who had no voice in her education and from the time her daughter was four years old began to be debarred from her by ever increasing restrictions.

In 1800 the King named the Princess of Wales Ranger of Greenwich Park, and thus bestowed on her, for the first time, a dignity of her own. In consequence she removed, in April 1801, to a more suitable residence, Montagu House on Blackheath. About the same time Princess Charlotte and her establishment were sent to Shrewsbury House on Shooter's Hill, and it became unnecessary for Caroline to resort to Carlton House. She found, however, that she was no longer allowed to see her child whenever she chose. Once a week, the Prince decreed, was to be enough: the young Princess's education ought not to be interrupted. The King felt and showed much indignation at the way in which Caroline was kept from her child. He himself really liked the Princess, and had she chosen she might perhaps have exploited his partiality, especially during the disturbed year 1801. But, more scrupulous than the Duke of York, she would take no doubtful advantage, and even sought

out Princess Elizabeth to explain to her that she knew that the King was ill, and that she did not mean to respond to the large offers he made. Nobody gave her much gratitude for her restraint, however. Elizabeth could not help telling Dr. Willis that she was always *afraid* when the Princess of Wales spoke to her "on such unfortunate subjects."

Charlotte's education, it seems, was in reality left to her excellent nurse or "dresser" Mrs. Gagarin. It suggests a pursuance of Queen Charlotte's system of treating the royal nurseries as a department for charity to foreigners, that this lady was, though an Englishwoman, the deceived and deserted wife of a Russian, and her assistant, Mrs. Louis, a Swiss. To Mrs. Gagarin, a high-minded woman who more than anyone supplied the place of a mother to the little Princess, who taught her to read and write and learn by heart, and developed in her a keen sense of rectitude and honour, Charlotte rendered almost a daughter's heed and love, and when Mrs. Gagarin was attacked by mortal illness and removed, at Queen Charlotte's instance, to the country, the Princess, then seventeen, brought her back again and watched over her last days with devotion.[1]

It was probably to this good woman that Caroline had written the following quaint note, almost from the nursery:[2]

Carlton House, 7 Oclock.

MADAM,

I was up stairs when my dear little Charlott was undress'd and stay'd till she was in bed and the dear little Angle was remarcable well. I am much obliged to you for your great attention to her and hope you will not return at Eight

[1] See "Fifty Years of My Life," by George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle.

[2] B.M. Addit. MSS., 24901, a holograph in a clear, almost childish, copper-plate hand.

Oclock if it is not convenient to your self as I am quite alone with my Lady's so I can go up stairs if any thing should be the matter and then I will lett you know hope to have the pleasure of seeing you much better tomorrow.

I am

CAROLINE.

When Princess Charlotte reached the age of eight it was high time that her education should be better provided for. Her grandfather, having regard to her future position, wished that it should be conducted not wholly upon ordinary feminine lines, but with some inclusion of the studies which at that period were reserved for boys alone. But instead of quietly enforcing his wishes, as he had the right to do, the King announced that he did not wish to supersede the natural rights of the parents, and this concession the Prince of Wales contrived so to use as finally to prevent the King from interfering at all, and almost to prevent the Princess Charlotte from receiving any education at all. He was aware that George III sympathized with the Princess of Wales, and to annoy her he had no hesitation in sacrificing the child. He discussed his daughter's fate with his associates, and found the Fitzherbert-Moira-Hutchinson section in favour of the King's having charge of the little Princess while Mrs. Fox and the Devonshire House circle were against it, "so that the alternative for our future Queen seems to be whether Mrs. Fox or Mrs. Fitzherbert shall have the ascendancy." Unhappily for the little girl Mrs. Fitzherbert's influence was waning, while at Windsor all the royal family were against the King, and found "his ideas concerning the child extraordinary." Once the Queen "took courage" and told the King that as the Prince was quiet he had "better leave things alone, for the Prince had never forbid his wife to see the child when she pleased."[1] It was literally true, he had simply

[1] Harcourt Papers.

given orders that if the Princess of Wales came she should be denied entrance.

The King's lapse into insanity in the spring of 1804, probably in the main due to the Prince's provocations, of course strengthened the hands of the latter. His mode of proceeding was to appear to concede all to the King, then, by way of postscript or afterthought, add some proviso which nullified all his concessions. By the end of the year all that the King, aided by Eldon, had extracted from the Prince was a general consent to the King's supervision, with a stipulation that "His Majesty *exclusively*" should control the course of education: "the Princess of Wales ought not to have or to appear to have any interference in it. This, of course, is not understood to affect His Majesty's pleasure as to any communication he may think fit to make to the Princess. The Prince of Wales has not the most distant notion of preventing the Princess of Wales from having all the intercourse with Princess Charlotte which her Royal Highness has hitherto had [*i.e.*, a short weekly visit], nor does his Royal Highness object to her residence in the house prepared at Windsor [for little Charlotte] in her occasional visits there, provided such residence be not so long as to countenance the idea the Prince wishes to avoid." This seemed explicit and not unreasonable. But on the very same day the Prince, as it were parenthetically, intimated that he expected to name the governors and governesses himself.

For a few weeks the old King was happy. He had prepared a house for his granddaughter's establishment, and wrote to Caroline that in all the arrangements he was thinking solely of the good of the dear child, concluding, "your authority as a mother it is my intention to support."

An excellent governess-in-chief, Lady de Clifford, now filled the post vacated by Lady Elgin, with two sub-

governesses, Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Udney, of whom Princess Charlotte quickly took a fancy to the first, and a distaste to the latter, without apparently any good reason in either case. A kind, sensible clergyman named Nott took charge of those masculine studies in Latin which the old King held so important, and Bishop Fisher (of Exeter, afterwards of Salisbury) was, less happily, chosen as superintendent of the whole business.

Early in 1805 Lady de Clifford took her charge to Windsor; the Princess of Wales was summoned to pay her first visit, and the pleased grandfather wrote (25th February): "It is quite charming to see the Princess and her child together." This mild manifesto was quite enough to make the Prince bestir himself. He sent Lady de Clifford[1] a long paper of instructions, talked of the natural rights of a father, and said it would be better for Charlotte to live at Carlton House whenever he was there himself, and simply pay short visits to Windsor, but that even this must depend on there being "no interference of any other person *whatever except* his Majesty in the dispositions to be made on this subject."

Hereupon the old King gave up the contest, saying he must either have the whole charge of the child or none. The residence at Windsor ended. Charlotte was carried back to London, and her mother was restricted to the one weekly visit which the little Princess now made to her, a visit which was frequently intermitted whenever the Prince bethought him of an excuse. The doctor to the royal family was, it seems, always an ally of the Prince, and whenever Charlotte seemed to be indisposed she was kept away from her mother.

It is hardly wonderful that Caroline confided to Mrs. George Villiers just about this time: "I cannot say I positively hate the Prince of Wales, but I certainly have a positive horror of him."

[1] "Fifty Years of My Life."

The years Charlotte spent under the care of Lady de Clifford were by no means unhappy. She was not yet old enough for her father to take pleasure in tormenting her, and as he usually ignored her except as an instrument for distressing her mother, she was left to sensible lessons and wholesome opportunities of fun. Lady de Clifford's grandchildren were often her playmates, the little girls became her uncomplaining and well-consoled victims, and their enterprising brother, a few years her junior, was her partner in all manner of pranks, the Princess furnishing funds and "grub," the boy cheerfully taking the inevitable floggings without a word of betrayal. She would roll the little girls down a hillock into a bed of nettles, rewarding the bravest with gifts of dolls; she hid in shrubberies and climbed railings; she loved a high swing, learned to saddle a horse, and made some acquaintance with other somewhat similar rudiments of a masculine education with more zest than her grandfather might have approved. Sometimes she was taken out shopping, incongruously assuming incognito under the *alias* of the meekest of the little Keppels. Wherever she went she showed the liveliest curiosity, and would contrive to fly all over the house, from garret to kitchen, eluding her governess and captivating the servants. On one occasion, she and her boy friend took possession of the kitchen and proceeded to cook Lady de Clifford's luncheon, with the natural result that her ladyship was moved to wrath and the children detected, and—"A pretty Queen you'll make!" quoth young Keppel to his accomplice.

He gives an interesting description of his royal playfellow when she was just twelve years old:

> Her complexion was rather pale. She had blue eyes, and that peculiarly blonde hair which was characteristic rather of her German than of her English descent. Her features were regular, her face, which was oval, had not that fulness which

later took off somewhat from her good looks. Her form was slender but of great symmetry; her hands and feet were beautifully shaped. When excited, she stuttered painfully. Her manners were free from the slightest affectation; they rather erred in the opposite extreme. She was an excellent actress whenever there was anything to call forth her imitative power. One of her fancies was to ape the manners of a man. On these occasions she would double her fists, and assume an attitude of defence that would have done credit to a professed pugilist. What I disliked in her, when in this mood, was her fondness for exercising her hands upon me in their clenched form. She was excessively violent in her disposition, but easily appeased, very warm-hearted, and never so happy as when doing a kindness. Unlike her grandmothers, the Duchess of Brunswick and the Queen of England, she was generous to excess. . . . I must not omit to mention sundry "tips," which I hardly think I should have accepted had I understood how near—our relative situations considered—her poverty was akin to my own. . . .[1]

Charlotte from childhood loved to play the princess: she would change in a flash from tomboy to mentor, and could assume great dignity at a moment's notice. There survives a quaint epistle written by her—at the age of twelve—when her playfellow had hinted at his empty purse:

. . . Your Grandmamma de Clifford allows me £10 a month. But though I spend it I take care never to go farther than my sum will allow. Now, dear George, if you do the same you will never want for money; say you have a guinea, well then, never go beyond it, and in time you will save up. That is the way everybody does, and so never get into dept. If you will call at Warwick House my porter Mr. Moore will give you half-a-guinea. If you use that well and give me an exact account how you spend it I will give you something more. I wish you was here. Write to me often and believe that no one loves you better than I do nor will be more happy

[1] "Fifty Years," i, pp. 289 *et seq.*

to help you in all troubles than I. We have very fine weather, and your mamma is here and is pretty well. Gramma de Clifford sends her love to you, and I remain,

Dear George,

Your very sincere and affectionate

CHARLOTTE.[1]

In spite of her ardent spirits the young Princess was not very strong, and every summer she was taken to the seaside, at Southend, Weymouth, Worthing, or Bognor, where she loved to be on the water. But it was seldom that her mother was able to contrive a meeting in these places, both were too well watched.

The shocking accusations made against the Princess of Wales in 1806 afforded a pretext for limiting her intercourse with Charlotte yet further. Warwick House, where from 1807 to 1812, Princess Charlotte principally lived, was close to Carlton House, and the Prince announced that he considered it a part of the latter and must interdict the Princess of Wales from entering it. On one occasion when Charlotte had been prevented by indisposition from paying her weekly visit to Blackheath, Caroline did venture to Warwick House and did see her daughter, but on a second attempt (April 1808) she was foiled. When, in 1807, the widowed Duchess of Brunswick fled to England, the Prince ordered that Charlotte should henceforth visit her grandmother on Saturdays for two hours, when her mother might be present, though Charlotte was never to be left alone with her. And for a year or two this was the sole intercourse permitted, except by correspondence, for which the young Princess had the family gift, although her bad spelling and almost illegible handwriting betrayed the scantiness of her education. "The Princess is her own governess," remarks one of her nominal teachers. Her constant letters formed one of her mother's chief pleasures.

[1] "Fifty Years," vol. i, p. 292.

"I must entertain you," writes the latter to Miss Hayman[1] in 1808,

> with the wit and amiableness of my daughter. She has been for two months at Bognor, and she wrote to me twice a week without the assistance of bishop, tutor, or governess; and she wrote just as she felt and thought, from first impulses; and if she remains so natural in her thoughts and feelings she will be very delightful for the private as well as the public.

It was at Bognor that in 1810 the mother and daughter were for a brief while together.

But in 1811 the recognition of the Prince of Wales as Regent gave him supreme authority over the royal family, and his unfortunate wife and daughter were thenceforth kept almost entirely apart. The Prince's intense jealousy and inordinate egoism made him apparently resentful of the very existence of his heir, and any hint of the affection and hope with which the nation regarded her augmented the spite which he clearly felt against her. He aimed at keeping her out of notice and never permitted any recognition of her as the future sovereign, and Queen Charlotte willingly lent herself to further his views, the more so that she considered the warm feelings and high spirit of her granddaughter alarmingly reminiscent of the Princess of Wales. The only right treatment for such unconventional originality she held to be severity, and accordingly she acted for several years as gaoler-in-chief to her granddaughter, of whom in the family circle she was heard to speak openly with bitter enmity and prejudice. Poor Princess Charlotte, at fifteen condemned to be shut up entirely in the schoolroom, isolated from any companionship but that of disapproving duennas and aunts, incessantly rebuked, prevented from seeing her mother except once a fortnight, under supervision, and even from writing to

[1] Weigall, p. 49.

her or anyone else unless she gave her letters up for inspection—and even then they were sometimes suppressed, while those sent to her were not delivered to her—grew nervous, irritable, and discontented. She was intensely conscious of her own destiny as future Queen, and deeply resented the enforced ignorance in which she was kept, never allowed to see anything of that world of society and politics in which one day, in the natural course of things, she would bear sway. She was sixteen before she was allowed to visit the Opera, or to see so much of ceremony as an opening of Parliament; she was nearly eighteen before she was confirmed, and was probably the only girl of eighteen in London who was considered too young to witness any of the festivals, public or private, with which the peace of 1814 was magnificently celebrated.

Naturally Charlotte inclined to identify her own interests with those of the mother whom the domestic tyrant was persecuting, and naturally she endeavoured to obtain a release from durance when Lady de Clifford, whose strength was perhaps unequal to the strain, and who disapproved strongly of the severe methods adopted, announced her resignation at the close of 1812. Charlotte was never told anything beforehand of the arrangements made for her, and she now nursed a hope that, being nearly seventeen, she might be allowed to come out, like other young ladies, and have a lady-in-waiting instead of a governess.

Several reports remain of Charlotte's naïvely straightforward request to this effect, made in a letter to Lord Liverpool, whom, as Prime Minister, it was the Prince's custom to employ in dealing with his family, and of the positive fury which her father displayed when he heard of it. He ordered Lady de Clifford to bring Charlotte to Windsor (17th January 1813), and himself, attended by Lord Chancellor Eldon, confronted her in

the presence of the stern Queen and Princess Mary. She found herself treated like a criminal before angry judges. The Chancellor first expounded to her the absolute authority of the Prince over his offspring, and then rated her for "the enormity" of the request she had made. The Prince burst into the most violent reproaches, informed her that she should never, unless she married, have any establishment of her own during his life, and finally asked the Chancellor what *he* would do if he had such a daughter. "If she were mine I'd lock her up," responded Eldon.[1] The Princess constrained herself to silence till she was allowed to escape to the room of one of her aunts, when she burst into tears, but was able to exclaim between her sobs, "What would the poor King have said if he could understand that his grand-daughter had been likened to the grand-daughter of a coal-heaver!"[2]

Lady de Clifford, almost as angry as Princess Charlotte and indignant because the Prince had treated her son-in-law, Albemarle, in a fashion contrary to his plighted word, insisted on laying down her office, and when the Regent proffered the conventional regret and surprise and pressed for her reason the old lady replied: "Because your Royal Highness has taught me the distinction between the word of honour of a prince and of a gentleman."

The day after the scene at Windsor the heiress of England found herself relegated to a conventual schoolroom under a new governess, the Duchess of Leeds, and though for a short time her "companion," Miss Knight—a learned lady taken from the old Queen's household and treated by Queen and Prince much like a nursery governess—felt much sympathy for her, she was unable

[1] He did: but his daughter, being well over thirty, contrived to escape, and married her lover (an unexceptionable person) by licence. The immorality of licences horrified Lord Eldon ever after.

[2] "Fifty Years" (Lady de Clifford's account), and Miss Knight.

to mitigate the rigour of the treatment adopted. Their life at Warwick House "was exactly like that of a child and her nurse." She describes the suspicion of his daughter shown by the Prince. Once when she had been allowed to dine with her mother at Kensington (in 1812), Miss Knight was ordered not to leave her for one moment, and not to stay beyond a certain hour. It was a quite simple visit; the Princess of Wales was gracious and agreeable to Miss Knight; Lady Charlotte Campbell played and sang to them. "I neither saw nor heard anything extraordinary." As they drove homewards the carriage was stopped, and Lord Yarmouth, one of the most dissolute of the Prince's boon companions, came to the door to speak to Princess Charlotte. It was the Prince's way of seeing that his order had been obeyed.

One of the reasons which made the squabble about Charlotte's education so serious was the fact that Carlton House was habitually filled with company of both sexes whom it was highly undesirable for the young Princess to meet. What was still worse was that her father's own agents—the men who composed the insulting innuendos against the Princess of Wales for the "Morning Chronicle," began to put about stories that the young Princess's conduct was too familiar, while he himself trumped up accusations of flirtation with the men in whose company he deliberately placed her—the attractive Duke of Devonshire on the one hand, and one of the FitzClarences[1] on the other. Her acquaintance with those sides of life, from knowledge of which young girls are usually shielded, had begun in childhood owing to the openness of the royal family. When she was but ten the Prince had put leading questions to her in hopes of getting damaging information against his wife. The Garths, who were at times in attendance upon her, were mixed up with the least

[1] The illegitimate children of William, Duke of Clarence.

reputable proceedings in the royal family. So incessant were the accusations and machinations of the Prince and his assistants about the poor child that she thought it might be a good way of escape to marry the elderly Duke of Gloucester, he had so good a character and temper, she said, that she should feel safe with him and the nation would respect him. It was not what the Prince desired at all, and no more was heard of it.

CHAPTER III

"THE DELICATE INVESTIGATION" (1806-7)

THE ordinary course of Caroline's life after she had established herself at Montagu House was by no means as comfortable as she had anticipated. For one thing she still had no settled income. The bills and salaries of her household were charged to the Prince's account, which usually meant that they remained unpaid, and it was felt to be necessary to make some better arrangement, especially as the Princess was extravagant in the scope and methods of her charities, and her generosity, equalled only by her ignorance, was shamefully imposed upon. The Prince therefore appointed Colonel Thomas her financial manager, but as this person was chosen rather as a trusty henchman of his master than for his business ability the confusion of the Princess's affairs only grew worse, while she resented his interference as that of a spy. She had recourse, like several of the royal family when in distress, to the kindness of the Duke of Kent, who went into the matter himself, and, convinced that Thomas was most unfit for this post, ventured with the greatest circumspection to write to his eldest brother to that effect. He felt very nervous, for the Prince of Wales usually took great umbrage at anything which looked like advice or criticism, but fortunately the Duke of Kent was, like most of the royal brothers, on friendly terms with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and as she was just then in the ascendant again with the Prince

of Wales, enlisted her influence on behalf of his unlucky sister-in-law. Mrs. Fitzherbert was always sorry for the Princess, in whom she saw the Prince's deceived and bigamous pseudo-wife, and she procured his attention to the Duke of Kent's representations so efficaciously that Caroline felt, and openly expressed, much gratitude.

The Princess had of course become aware of her husband's reconciliation with Mrs. Fitzherbert, for this was made public (in January 1800) by his sitting in her box at the Opera, the place where, during the eighteenth century, those social arrangements were notified which are nowadays made public in the newspapers. The Princess of Wales, as well as Lady Jersey, happened to be in the house on that occasion, and she was observed to cast many curious glances at the couple. Whether or no the supersession of Lady Jersey afforded her any satisfaction, she certainly never felt any resentment against Mrs. Fitzherbert. "That is the Prince's true wife," she said more than once, "she is an excellent woman; it is a great pity for him he ever broke with her."

Both at Charlton and at Montagu House the Princess of Wales made some attempt to maintain a society suited to her rank, and, little as she cared for formal entertainments, occasionally gave dinners or concerts to which she could invite persons of dignified station, but the theatre and the Opera provided her own real recreation. She always, of course, had a box and took a party with her. She had her regular little court, or household. The three ladies of the bedchamber took their usual turns of office, for a month at a time each, to attend her during the more formal proceedings of the day. Four women of the bedchamber were her constant companions, also in their turns. Lord and Lady Cholmondeley had remained on polite terms. Lady Willoughby d'Eresby was always friendly, Lady Carnarvon had retained her post, while of the later additions to her retinue Lady Glenbervie, Lady Sheffield,

Lady Charlotte Lindsay, as well as Mrs. Lisle, Lady Charlotte Campbell, and Lady Anne Hamilton, remained with her for many years and were always well disposed towards her. The first three were daughters of Lord North, the former Prime Minister, the last two, of the Dukes of Argyll and Hamilton. Even a friend of the Prince, Sir Gilbert Elliot, recorded how agreeably she could entertain her company, and thought her "very undeserving of such strange neglect and repudiation." "She is certainly not discreet [in her confidences], but she is, on the other hand, certainly all nature."

The Princess appeared at court only upon a few state occasions, such as the King's birthday or the wedding of the Princess Royal, on which latter occasion she and her husband met and spoke to each other for the last time in their lives.

But the cultivation of society was a constant struggle. The Prince of Wales refused to go to any place where he might meet his wife, and Caroline, who could not bear to inconvenience others, several times abstained from visiting public or private entertainments lest the Prince should vent resentment upon the hosts. It was notorious that the Queen and the Princesses seldom or never visited her, and naturally enough few in the fashionable world cared to risk the displeasure of both Queen and Prince by paying attentions to a Princess of Wales who seemed so unlikely ever to rule a court.

Hence Caroline did not always find her invitations accepted, and she began to notice that the visitors to her box at the Opera were usually only members of the Opposition in the House of Commons, or men of letters. She could not but be sensitive to slights and shrink from incurring them. Under these circumstances she did not always find it easy to maintain the cheerfulness which was her natural habit of mind, and the manifestation whereof she evidently came to feel necessary to her own

self-respect, as a proof that the Prince had not got the better of her and broken her spirit.

She was probably more successful in her pursuit of happiness when busy with the various children whom she took care of, or, as she termed it, "adopted," and when she was staying in the country. She used to spend the summer at one or another small watering-place, and by degrees explored most of the south-east coast from Ramsgate to Portsmouth, besides making a successful visit to Mount Edgecumbe. She was fond of the sea and of ships; the six boys for whom she had made herself responsible were sent to be trained in the navy, every pair under the charge of a captain of repute. When the lads were within reach she found pleasure in writing to them and getting letters from them, and when their ships were off the coast she took pains to make what entertainments she could for them, and maintained friendly intercourse with their commanders, Sir Samuel Hood, Captain (afterwards Sir Graham) Moore, and Captain Manby (afterwards Rear-Admiral). With sailors and travellers she always felt perfectly at ease.

At Blackheath it was more difficult to find suitable amusement, and amusement, says Lady Charlotte Campbell, was to her as absolute a necessary of life as food. She had little love of reading, no artistic taste, and she did not care for the universal pastime, cards. When her daughter began to be kept from her she sought to fill the void in her affections by playing at domestic life with other children, and in them she at times became curiously absorbed. The accident of a respectable poor woman asking help through one of her servants led to her adopting the baby Willie Austin, on whom she lavished an excessive fondness; others applied for similar help, and in a short time she startled Lady Charlotte Campbell by announcing, "I have nine children." In her exaggerated, imaginative talk (not of the most delicate kind) she was

apt to dwell on such unsuitable topics as the ease with which babies might be smuggled into her house—and the like.

Her duller hours she endeavoured to occupy by distractions very unusual for a princess. She possessed robust health and liked active exercise, and when the fancy seized her would set off on long walks or drives over the fields and commons of the southern suburbs, too ignorant to share the nervousness of her unlucky ladies, and finding sport in the inconvenience or fear they suffered. Hating ceremony and, like a true member of her family, infinitely preferring conversation to reading, she encouraged visits from anybody she found interesting: the judge Sir William Scott (Lord Stowell), George Canning, Sir Gilbert Elliot and his wife, the latter a great favourite, the poet Campbell, the physician Beattie, Sir Sidney Smith, men of learning like Sir Henry Englefield and Sir William Gell, and even Pitt and Dundas, were among the guests whom she liked to entertain, their common characteristic being that all were brilliant talkers, and none was ceremonious. They all seem to have respected and liked her, and found her very good company. She was an excellent listener and full of intelligent curiosity, though her guests never knew whether she would set them going in lively conversation, take them out to stroll in the dew and hear her confidences, or make them play at Blindman's Buff or "musical magic"—as at the wonderful party where she compelled Pitt to kiss the Queen of Prussia's bust, made Frere and Long nurse bolsters for babies, and had Dundas squeezing her hand and calling her an angel. ("What can the old thing mean?" asks the much amused Elliot.)

The drawback to this manner of life was that it was highly unconventional. The Princess of Wales was turning her back on all that Society expected of her.

Had she played high at cards, like many of the ladies in the august circle of the Prince of Wales, or developed a passion for jewels, had she patronized racing and hunting, or frequented balls and concerts in the extreme of fashionable dress, Society might have tolerated some excess of loudness, rudeness, and flirtation, for Society was far from squeamish. But to fondle other people's—and perhaps poor people's—babies, to wander about public gardens among common tradespeople, dressed in remarkably short skirts, untidy shoes, and a hideous bonnet wholly out of the fashion, to drive about country lanes in a gig, or spend half the day in a rowing boat with an old lady and a couple of sailors, and relish picnic luncheons of a schoolboy description—these proceedings were eccentric to the verge of impropriety. The Duchess of York, to be sure, was rather eccentric, but her family of dogs did not court notice, and she behaved with perfect refinement in public. In the Princess of Wales's eccentricities there was nothing graceful or clever; on the contrary, she was often silly, and even vulgar, especially in her conversation. Never thoroughly at home in the English language, Caroline was still, as ever, careless how she expressed her meaning, so that it was emphatic. She would chatter (as had long ago been foretold), only vaguely aware of the meaning of some of the odd phrases she used. Absurd, vulgar, or even improper terms interlarded her talk, much as, in a later year, Lady Charlotte Campbell observed her to be equably attending to a disgusting anecdote, seemingly unaware that it related to anything extraordinary. Moreover, she was strangely ignorant of the requirements and restraints of good manners. Her year under the roof of her husband and Lady Jersey had introduced her to little of that description, and since leaving Carlton House she had not had much opportunity of observing Society at its best, while she was without the timidity which would have led her

to be circumspect and ask counsel of her ladies. What others would allude to with accepted periphrasis, she talked of in plain terms with the simplicity of a child. There was nothing wrong (says Lady Charlotte Campbell) in what she said, but it was odd to say such things in general company, and as none but the few ladies who had learned to know her well credited her with simplicity, she was commonly considered indelicate. She was very often imprudent in the subjects of her conversation and criticized people, especially the royal family, with thoughtless openness. Of the King himself she spoke always with respect and affection, but for the Queen—"de old begune" [Beguine], as she termed her—she had no tolerance, and she made a mock with dangerous facility of the Prince himself—my beloved, my better half, my *caro sposo*, as she termed him. The only *faux pas* she had ever committed, she once observed, was having married the husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert.

Some months after she had established herself at Blackheath a Sir John Douglas came to live there, a colonel of marines who had played a prominent part at the famous siege of Acre beside Sir Sidney Smith, with whom he had since struck up a close friendship. Sir Sidney was just then at the height of his perhaps somewhat inflated fame, and it was probably by his means that the Princess, who had known him for some time, made acquaintance with his friends. For Lady Douglas she displayed one of those violent friendships which had in her youth annoyed Lord Malmesbury, and for about a year the Douglases, as well as Sir Sidney Smith, were on extremely intimate terms with her.

It was characteristic of Caroline that she was a bad judge of character. She did not detect pinchbeck; she was not offended by vulgarity. She even, apparently, liked a dash of vulgarity in manner, probably believing

it a mark of genuineness, the quality she prized above all others, her experiences of court morals having led her to connect fine manners with insincerity. In reality the Douglases, persons of low origin and coarse habits, were beneath the notice of honest people; and this at length became known to the Princess, who endeavoured to drop their acquaintance—a proceeding which seemed easy, since they removed from Blackheath for six months, owing to the colonel's military engagements. Lady Douglas, however, on her return continued to call on the Princess, and on receiving a request not to do so became extremely angry. From about this time ("for more than two years," she said) the Princess began to receive anonymous hints that some mischief was intended towards her, that her behaviour was being secretly investigated, and that her neighbours as well as her servants were being questioned upon her conduct. The Douglases had also received insulting anonymous letters, several of which purported to come from the Princess of Wales, and Sir John had seen public caricatures or aspersions on his wife and Sir Sidney Smith which he assumed to be inspired by her Royal Highness, for all of which he sought revenge.

Caroline, when she understood from the rumours which reached her that Sir John Douglas was attacking her reputation, had recourse to the Duke of Kent, who went to see Sir John, heard his complaints and surmises, exonerated the Princess, and thought a promise was given that she should no longer be annoyed. The Duke felt perfectly assured that no blame was to be ascribed to his sister-in-law, and naturally reported nothing of the affair to the King or the Prince.

The Douglases waited for a better opportunity, and towards the close of 1805 confided their suspicions to Sir John's superior officer, the Duke of Sussex, a well-meaning but rather fussy man, who conceived himself bound

in duty to carry to the Prince of Wales the shocking story he heard. The Prince sent for Lady Douglas, who stated that she knew for certain that the Princess was the mother of Willie Austin, and swore to a narrative of conversation disgusting enough to smirch the character of any woman. Her statements were laid by the Prince before Lord Thurlow and Sir Samuel Romilly, who told him that such evidence was insufficient to act upon, and he then employed Sir John Douglas's solicitor to discover more. Two servants, named Cole and Bidgood, formerly in the Prince's service and sent by him to attend the Princess as pages (or upper footmen) when he separated from her, offered testimony. These men corroborated Lady Douglas's accusations, made some additional and sensational charges of their own, and told the solicitor where to find certain discharged servants, washerwomen, etc., who would support their assertions.

Thus provided, the Prince laid the case before the King and asked for an inquiry into the conduct of the Princess of Wales. The moment was favourable; Pitt was dead, and the new ministers, "All the Talents," were the leaders of the Prince of Wales's Opposition—Grenville, Fox, Spencer, and their colleagues. Upon the statements being laid before them the Cabinet could hardly do otherwise than recommend that an inquiry should be made, which, for the sake of propriety, as they said, had better be secret. The King in consequence, on 29th May 1806, gave the necessary authority to Lord Grenville, the Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor Erskine, Lord Spencer, and Chief Justice Ellenborough. The Commission, being private, proceeded not by forms of law, but by simply questioning such persons as the four members chose to call before them. They did not question the Princess, who first received the intimation of the inquiry by the arrival of two lawyers at her house to summon a number of her servants before the Com-

missioners. She herself was neither asked nor permitted to make any statement or to send any witnesses to testify on her behalf. She did not know what charges were made, and learned only from rumour who were the witnesses against her.

The Prince of Wales, who hoped that this investigation would pave his way to a divorce, appeared to take no active share in it himself. But, ten days before the Commissioners received the royal warrant, his personal friend Lord Moira interviewed two doctors of reputable position, Edmeades and Mills, who had been quoted by an under servant (the F. Lloyd mentioned below) as having made a serious imputation on the Princess. Each of the doctors absolutely denied that he ever said, or thought, such a thing, and they expressed some indignation at the use made of their names. Moira,[1] however, tried first to cajole, then to frighten, Edmeades into some sort of admission, or at least into acquiescence in a hint, adding slyly that he could not but think there must be *something* in what the girl had said. But the doctor refused any connivance and intimated that if more were said he should take steps to protect his own character.

For a month and a half the Commissioners took evidence, and on 14th July sent their report to the King.

In this report they sum up the declarations made at the examination, and state:

> We are happy to declare that there is no foundation whatever for believing that the child [Willie Austin] is the child of her Royal Highness . . . a fact so fully contradicted and by so many witnesses . . . that we cannot think it entitled to the smallest credit.

But the Commissioners added that, besides this prin-

[1] "The Book," pp. 161-162.

cipal charge, clearly proved to be false, the declarations contained

> other particulars concerning the conduct of her Royal Highness such as must, especially considering her exalted rank and station, necessarily give occasion to very unfavourable interpretations . . . particularly the examinations of Robert Bidgood, William Cole, Frances Lloyd and Mrs. Lisle . . . witnesses who cannot, in our judgement, be suspected of any unfavourable bias and whose veracity, in this respect, we have seen no ground to question. . . . We think the circumstances to which we now refer, particularly those stated to have passed between her Royal Highness and Captain Manby, must be credited until they receive decisive contradiction, and, if true, are justly entitled to the most serious consideration.
>
> (Signed) ERSKINE, SPENCER, GRENVILLE, ELLENBOROUGH.

Captain Manby, an officer already distinguished by his skill and gallantry in action, was at this time on a dangerous service in the West Indies.[1] The Princess was not allowed to testify. Her companion, Miss Fitzgerald, as well as her principal servants had already contradicted as decisively as witnesses could do the alleged "circumstances stated to have passed." The Commissioners' report practically inflicted on the Princess a sentence of guilty on an unproven charge, until at some indefinite future time the charge might receive a "decisive contradiction." This, however, it did receive as soon as Captain Manby reached England; he at once made his affidavit that the charge against himself and the Princess was "a vile and wicked invention, wholly and absolutely false." And no attention whatever was paid to his con-

[1] His duties there had been well accomplished when, on starting for home, he was ordered to take a quantity of diseased men on board among his exceptionally healthy crew, with the natural result that he lost one third of his crew and nearly died himself. See Dict. Nat. Biog. as to him and his better-known brother, George.

tradiction. The King had at once informed the Princess that in consequence of the Commissioners' report she could not be received at court, in other words, her character was openly and officially blasted, and so remained during the ministry of "All the Talents."

As the proceedings of 1806 formed the ground of the later attacks on the Princess, it is necessary to consider them here more closely.

The latter part of the Commissioners' verdict is naturally usually quoted as containing the net result of the whole investigation, and inquiry seldom goes behind the names of the four dignified signatories.

But probably few could now wade through the whole of the evidence without being struck by several startling considerations:

(1) The four witnesses named as *particularly* giving compromising evidence were the *only* witnesses who did so besides the Douglases (whose statements were adjudged to be absolutely false), and this evidence was rebutted by a larger number of witnesses at least as worthy of credence, whose testimony was summarily ignored.

(2) The four witnesses thus classed together were by no means on a par, nor were their statements of the same nature. Mrs. Lisle, one of Caroline's ladies of the bedchamber, much respected by her mistress and everyone else, and long afterwards still in her service, expressly denied the possibility of any misconduct, and was only induced to offer one personal criticism—her own opinion of the good taste and dignity of the Princess in her mode of conversation one evening with Captain Manby. If she were obliged to find an adjective for the style of conversation, Mrs. Lisle considered that it might be called *flirting*—"such as only a woman who liked flirting" would use. If the Commissioners merely wanted evidence of the Princess's lack of good taste and familiar, personal style of talk, it is to be feared they could have collected

it after every dinner-party; and half London society might have been cited as her example and justification.

(3) Of the three servants placed on a sort of equality with Mrs. Lisle, F. Lloyd had already been proved a liar by the two doctors. A second charge which she brought against the Princess and Sir Sidney Smith was also disproved. She made it, she said, on the authority of her superior, Mary Wilson. But when Wilson absolutely denied having either said or seen what she was alleged to have done, Lloyd retracted and declared that she only meant to say that Mary Wilson had told her that the Princess and Sir Sidney were in the drawing-room. Lloyd's third assertion, taken this time from a charwoman, was also denied by her alleged authority, and what remained of all her testimony was a recollection of having, one summer morning when she opened the shutters, perceived the Princess in the garden walking with a tall gentleman, and of being told to get some breakfast ready early.

(4) The real accusers, or witnesses, were Bidgood and Cole. The evidence of the former consists chiefly of his own suppositions, arranged in something of a circle, two hypotheses proving each other. But he positively accused Sir Sidney Smith, because his wife had told him that F. Lloyd had told her that M. Wilson had told *her* —what M. Wilson had absolutely denied and Lloyd had retracted. But Bidgood also accused Captain Manby, saying that once when the Princess had sent for him to the ante-room, looking through the open door at the looking-glasses he was sure he beheld a kiss exchanged. Between his two depositions Bidgood had consulted Lady Douglas.

(5) Cole—four of whose five statements had been previously made at his leisure to Douglas's solicitor—went further: he roundly accused Sir Sidney Smith, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Captain Manby, and Captain Moore,

and made grave imputations upon Canning, Lord Hood, and his son, Captain Hood.

That the veracity of these three witnesses should have seemed to the Commissioners "unquestionable" in their imputations on half-a-dozen gentlemen of honour and position, although the rest of their evidence, bearing on Willie Austin, had been declared to be utterly baseless, can only be regarded as amazing.

(6) The evidence given was not written down *verbatim*, but summed up. However carefully this might be done, it is possible to suppose that where the evidence—as in the case of Mrs. Lisle—was concerned with the shade of an opinion, the meaning might be more truthfully gathered from a complete report, while, as the Commissioners did not give the questions put, and ran the answers together into a whole, much of the evidence which appears to be a categorical statement might wear a very different complexion if the leading questions which extracted it were recorded.

The Commissioners had not asked for any evidence as to the character of Cole or Bidgood, who were, of course, well known to have been in the Prince's employment.[1] But the Princess afterwards wrote to the King that she had been long annoyed by Cole's impertinence, and by finding that when she went out he used to sit in her drawing-room, turn over her books, and play on her harpsichord, and she had, with extreme circumspection —unwilling to dismiss a servant placed with her by the Prince himself—got the Duke of Kent, in 1802, to arrange quite politely that the man should only attend her in London and not at Blackheath.

One of his bits of "evidence" was that he was sure he heard whispering when he listened at the closed door of a parlour.

[1] Bidgood was subsequently provided for by his grateful master in the establishment of Princess Charlotte.

It is further curious that, if Cole was so satisfactory a witness, his very definite charges against Sir Sidney Smith, and his aspersions on Moore, Lawrence, Canning, and Hood were tacitly dropped. Sir Sidney, indeed, was out of the way in the Mediterranean on active service—but he was a popular hero and notoriously a bad man to offend. Lawrence, who had been commissioned by the King to paint portraits of Caroline and her daughter, and had received friendly hospitality from the Princess, only in September had an opportunity of repudiating the gross stigma on his character, and when he came in considerable wrath to do so he was assured that no breath of suspicion rested on him. The only person left under the cloud of suspicion—the gentlemen being all exonerated—was the Princess! It would seem that the plan adopted was really the simple and always effective one of throwing so much mud that some would be sure to stick.

It may be added, that two days after sending their report to the King, the Commissioners bethought themselves of the anonymous letters to Douglas which had, it was alleged, first stirred up the storm. Lord Cholmondely, as one well acquainted with the Princess's handwriting, was called in, and declared on his oath that the principal letter was certainly not in her writing, while the others, in which a few resemblances might be detected, were in a disguised hand.

Secret though the Commission nominally was, everybody was acquainted with it. "The Princess's business," writes a lady in June, "is Like a Cover'd volcano. Everyone wishes to talk but it is generally understood that it is a dangerous subject of Conversation." Society quite understood that Sir Sidney Smith and Captain Manby were (in their absence) seriously involved, "but the 'Morning Post' and the 'Morning Chronicle' seem resolved to whitewash this poor unfortunate creature."

Yet it was only after repeated and pressing requests

that Caroline herself obtained a copy of evidence and verdict. She had able advisers in Perceval, Plumer, and Eldon, and they drew up for her an able and complete statement of her case, which was sent to the King (2nd October), but of which absolutely no notice was taken.

Thus the whole of the town gossiped over the evidence against Caroline, while it was impossible for her to publish any refutation. She gave to the King an obvious and sufficient explanation of Manby's presence. Two of her adopted boys were in his ship, and he brought them to see her, his ship being stationed in the Downs while she was staying near Ramsgate, and off Southend while she had a house there. He had sailed round the world with Vancouver, and entertained her with descriptions and illustrations of their discoveries. He was one of her many traveller friends—and, indeed, a man of very varied attainments and fine character.

In George Manby's "Reminiscences"[1] he tells how the notorious McMahon called, disguised, at his and his brother's lodgings to leave an anonymous letter which contained a *carte blanche* for Captain Manby to name any sum not over £40,000 if he would give or furnish such information as would convict the Princess of Wales. Manby indignantly flung it into the fire. Next day McMahon called to ask for the answer. George Manby was forbidden by his brother to repeat what else he was cognisant of concerning "the injustice, the persecution, and the discreditable acts and arts resorted to to effect an object scarcely paralleled by those that so much disgraced the reign of Henry VIII," but he significantly remarks that the royal displeasure, on account of Captain Manby's refusal of the invitation mentioned above, was visited upon both brothers.

The King's acquiescence throughout these proceedings

[1] Privately printed. A copy is in the British Museum.

would seem extraordinary, considering how fond he had shown himself of Caroline, and how indignant at the mode in which the Prince treated her, unless it be remembered that his health, at least in mind, was at this time failing very much; he had in several respects reversed long standing habits and convictions, witness the resentment he expressed against the Queen's supervision, the readiness with which he expressed encomiums on the Prince of Wales, and the startling ease with which he had admitted Fox to office in 1806 after having inexorably excluded him up to 1805. He was in a docile phase.

Caroline's parents were by no means indifferent, but they could do no more than write to the King pathetic prayers which had no effect, and which possibly remained in the hands of Queen Charlotte or the Prince. The Duke of Brunswick was at the time in the field in the futile campaign of Jena, and in October, in the midst of her troubles, Caroline learned that he, the being she loved most in the world, as she said, had met a soldier's death, and that her mother and brother were making their dangerous way to England, as the sole land of refuge. She had no possible defender or home to look to, while in England she had been declared an outcast from the royal family, and was cut off from her daughter as well as from the old King.

At the end of the year 1806 Caroline endeavoured to procure a definite statement by requesting the King to receive her on the occasion of Queen Charlotte's birthday in January. But the clever policy of silence, that skilful trick of injustice, was persisted in, and she was kept six weeks without an answer. The birthday being over, the King wrote that his advisers told him that there was no reason why he should not see the Princess (who had now been ostracized for six months), but that there were "circumstances of conduct on the part of the Princess which his Majesty never could regard but with

serious concern." But Caroline could never get a date fixed for her reception, and when she herself named a day on which she intended to wait on his Majesty, she was informed (10th February 1807) that the Prince of Wales had requested his Majesty to postpone further steps because he was about to put all the papers into the hands of his own lawyers.

At this second attempt to prejudge her cause Caroline, by Perceval's advice, intimated that unless she were received and publicly recognized in some way, such as by the assignment of one of the royal houses for her residence, she would place her whole case before the nation, and she laid before the King (5th March) an eloquent and full justification of herself, drawn up by Plumer and Perceval.[1] Perceval's threat of publicity was no empty one. He was carefully seeing through the press the whole of the evidence, "The Book," as it was called, which was, however, withheld from publication at the very last moment, so that the copies had to be bought up at Government expense. It was perceived that the *whole* of the Princess's case might involve an exposure of the Prince so shocking that it could not be faced, and, moreover, the whirligig of politics for once was in Caroline's favour. Throughout that month "the Talents" were breaking up. Fox was dead. The King, once more himself, was, as in old times, manœuvring with Eldon and Perceval to get rid of his Whig Ministers, and in April the disastrous Grenville Ministry finally disappeared, and was replaced by that led by Perceval, Eldon, and Portland, of which Canning, another of Caroline's friends, was an important member.

The new Cabinet at once advised that the King should without delay receive his daughter-in-law into his court and family, and assign to her some official residence,

[1] Romilly's "Memoirs," vol. ii.

Eldon, now Lord Chancellor, declaring that *all* the charges against her were either contradicted or rested on evidence wholly undeserving of credit.

Caroline was at last publicly received by both King and Queen, that is to say, the stigma fixed upon her for the past year was declared to be removed, and as a sort of notification to the public a suite of apartments was prepared for her in Kensington Palace, which had been deserted for half a century.

What the "Delicate Investigation" (as it was termed) had inflicted upon her, besides the desperate agitation of a year's indignation and suspense, was a year of separation from her child and from good society, the certainty that a vague suspicion impossible to combat hung about her reputation, and the loss of all these good and pleasant friends in whose lively and intellectual discourse she had found a great deal of pleasure. That Canning, Lawrence, Smith, or Manby would again subject her and themselves to the menace of scandal by friendly intercourse could not be expected, nor would newer acquaintances be likely to venture on the same easy unrestrained friendship. The Princess of Wales, at forty, found herself censoriously regarded unless she retained a chaperone beside her at every moment of the day. This was only what most royalties were accustomed to, but Caroline had embraced the freer habits of ordinary Englishwomen, and it was impossible to her to submit to a semblance of supervision.

For the next three or four years the Princess of Wales tried to emerge from the enforced privacy of 1806-7. She felt it wise to appear sometimes in society, and she was, in 1809, freed from the dread of her husband's continual interference by a formal recognition of their separation, drawn up in a document which was signed by the Prince and Princess and by the King, the Lord Chancellor, and three of his ministerial colleagues. It was agreed that the

Prince should pay the debts she had incurred of nearly £50,000, and make her an allowance of £22,000.

Kensington Palace now provided her with a dignified town house, and she frequented the theatre and "the dear opera" steadily. Occasionally she is mentioned as witnessing a debate in the House of Commons, and being entertained to luncheon by Mr. Speaker. She gave dinner parties and even balls, at which the best company were present, including the Dukes of Kent, Sussex, and Gloucester, whose countenance to some extent made up for the pointed absence of the rest of the royal family. The Duchess of York[1] called upon her twice a year regularly so long as she remained in England. Even Queen Charlotte felt obliged to yield so far as to invite her detested daughter-in-law occasionally to dine at the Queen's house, though she took pains to point out to others that it was only as a companion to the Duchess of Brunswick that the Princess was asked, and not on her own account.

The unfortunate Duchess of Brunswick, now in advanced age, succeeded in 1807 in reaching England *via* Sweden, and found her exile somewhat comforted by her daughter's attentions. Trouble had softened Caroline's feelings towards her mother. She had put her Charlton villa in readiness, and the Duchess found the rooms there fitted up for her with all the little trifles and conveniences which exactly suited her, and when she removed to a quiet house of her own in town Caroline had all this furniture sent thither before the Duchess arrived, so that she might feel herself at once at home. She constantly visited her mother, yet had so little forgotten early grudges that she would never allow Lady Charlotte Campbell to talk to the ancient lady in attendance on the Duchess, because she had long ago been an enemy in Brunswick.

[1] The Duchess's refusal to recognize Mrs. Fitzherbert is said to have caused the Regent's coldness to her and the Duke of York.

CHAPTER IV

MIDDLE LIFE

THE atmosphere of decorum which her friends rejoiced to see surrounding the Princess of Wales was not destined to last long. After the year 1810 her position was menaced by fresh dangers; first, by the breakdown of the old King; secondly, by new symptoms of eccentricity and imprudence in her own conduct.

It was not so much the apparent existence, for a short time, of a tender sentiment between her Royal Highness and Lord Henry Fitzgerald which perturbed her ladies—though the enmity of Lady de Ros, Fitzgerald's wife, might prove inconvenient—as her passion for always doing unsuitable things. As if in protest against the necessary conventions of life, she loved to make a mystery of little matters, and so gave scope and colour to the insinuations of gossip. Thus, she would not tell her coachman where she wished to be driven, but would point to the direction or road she fancied, a servant watching all the while for her gesture. When she was going to visit her little nephews of Brunswick she dragged her companion in and out of the houses in Bayswater where "apartments to let" were announced, pretending to the landladies that she was seeking rooms, until she arrived at the right house. She had copied the fashion then prevalent among the great of setting up a cottage wherein to be *incognita* and play at the simple life. Imaginative Lady Charlotte Campbell, who became one of her ladies in 1810, could not but recollect Marie

Antoinette, and shudder, when the Princess spent whole days in her cottage at Bayswater, which presented a mean but tawdrily gay appearance which the Princess thought artistic. Lady Charlotte's plight was the sorrier for Caroline's sudden adherence to another fashionable craze—music. She no longer retained a good voice, but with her favourite musicians, a family named Sapio, mother, father, and son, she used to spend long evenings singing very badly, rhapsodizing, flattering, and chattering nonsense. That such people drained her of money during her ridiculous infatuation was bad, that she admitted them to her table and allowed them to be familiar with her was far worse.

From this time, indeed, Caroline showed herself reckless in her choice of associates. She could bear suffering, but not being bored. "Mine Got, dat is de dullest person God Almighty ever did born!" was a queer judgement not infrequently pronounced, which put the offenders out of court. With a perversity not seldom noticeable in proud and disinterested persons, she would never try to please those who might be useful to her; a hint to her that any one ought to be cultivated was enough to make her rude, while, where she really liked or really pitied, she would scout any suggestion of prudence. Lady Oxford might be of ill repute, but she was very entertaining; Lady Perceval might be a weak gossip, but the Princess was genuinely fond of her.

Moreover Caroline was increasingly restless and nervous; the constant anonymous letters, hints from friends, and paragraphs in newspapers suggesting that the Regent might imprison her (Holyrood was frequently suggested), divorce her, or exile her, could hardly fail to agitate her spirits, especially when year by year she found herself separated more and more from her child. She became a prey to moods of self-pity, and to the fear of being left to her own unpleasant thoughts.

Sometimes she would gather a brilliantly intellectual company at her table, such as Ward (afterwards Lord Dudley)—who found her "a lively, good-natured, amusing woman," and delighted her by one of the *mal à propos* speeches for which he was famous, when he assured her that the Duchess of Oldenburg possessed an intelligence extremely rare among princesses—as well as Byron, Lamb (afterwards Lord Melbourne and Prime Minister), and his wild wife Lady Caroline, Payne Knight, Dr. Young, Charles Burney (Mme. d'Arblay's nephew), 'Monk' Lewis, and other men of learning and wit. She filled her house with new books, but was too impatient to read much of them, patronized musicians, but found fault with all the music. For one evening on which she would charm Lady Charlotte with racy descriptions and clever criticisms of the scenes of her early life there were a dozen on which she would frame wild threats or impossible plans, or lament her own fate with impotent grief and resentment.

When she invited people to dinner or accepted an invitation she usually engaged a box at the play and had her carriage in waiting, so that if the company did not amuse her she might escape early, deserting her guests with the complacent comment: "I daresay they think me mad." They preferred, however, to think that she was bad. Whenever she thought that she perceived in her visitors any hesitancy or suspicion she perversely delighted in "playing up" to what she thought they expected, would behave absurdly, talk mysteriously or even loosely, and drop hints and perhaps positive statements about herself which were wholly fictitious, merely in order to see the shocked looks of her auditors and would plume herself on having taken them in. Why, her horrified ladies would ask, why did her Royal Highness invent such extraordinary tales? She would answer with a loud laugh.

Perhaps Lady Charlotte Campbell, whom Caroline could see to be sentimental, rather gullible, and very self-conscious, was especially favoured with exhibitions of this kind, but Lady Glenbervie was quite as much shocked by the unpleasant manners her royal mistress affected, and was obliged (writes her genteel husband) to exercise her own "vertu, esprit and prudence" to render her position "convenable." The aged Duchess of Brunswick was powerless to control her daughter; she grieved over Caroline's errors bitterly. "She has this excuse," she once said to Lord Redesdale, "she is not quite right *here*" (touching her forehead), and burst into tears over the admission.[1]

Of course the Princess did not see herself as did her few pitying friends: a discarded wife without rights or hopes, useful to none, an embarrassment to most, at best an object for chivalrous charity; in her own eyes she was the innocent, wronged Princess, royally superior to rules and conventions, condescending, disinterested, and heroically honest, waiting inflexibly till the acclaim of a noble nation should somehow replace her in the royal position from which the vices of others had so long thrust her out. Yet while she would never stoop, as she considered it, to conciliate the opinion of the influential, or to rouse the passions of the crowd, she could take pleasure in the obsequious flattery of persons of mean position. It was by no means entirely owing to the Regent and his machinations that in 1813 she had to own: "I am becoming more and more insignificant every day, and cannot say I feel sure of having a single friend in England."

When, in February 1811, all hope of the old King's recovery was given up and the Prince of Wales became Regent, there was no need of the stimulus afforded by the Princess's follies to ensure that he would attack her

[1] "Diary of a Lady of Quality."

as soon as was practicable. His hatred of her had become a mania. He was bent upon a divorce, and to this end deliberately drove her to extremities. When he was being pressed for a decision on a matter of urgent importance in the war, he is said to have exclaimed: "D—— the North, and d—— Lord Wellington! Can you do or say nothing by which I can get rid of that d——d Princess of Wales?" The Regent wielded not only the absolute authority then the legal right of every man over wife and child, but also the power of the sovereign over the royal family, a power which, strengthened by precedents of former Hanoverian sovereigns and by the Royal Marriage Act, was more despotic than that of any private person.

He had, with his usual taste, celebrated his father's enforced deposition and his own accession to power by an extravagantly gorgeous banquet, nominally to entertain the exiled royal family of France. Princess Charlotte, now fifteen, and half expecting to be accorded some notice as the future heir to the crown, was ignominiously sent to Windsor to be out of the way of any possible attention. Mrs. Fitzherbert was as summarily deprived of her mysterious semi-conjugal position by the intimation: "You know, Madam, you have no place." Caroline, of course, was left in her privacy, but to those of her ladies who were invited, she gave new dresses for the occasion. The joke ran that "the two wives were left at home."

For several months uncertainty reigned in the political world and in the mind of the Prince whether he would fulfil his pledges of so many years past and substitute for the Tory ministers of his father the Grey and Grenville Whigs, "the friends of my early public life," as he affectionately termed them, in whose principles, as he boasted, he had trained up his daughter. For whatever might be the fashionable constitutional sentiments professed by orators within or without the Houses, few things

were more clear than that the disposal of office now really depended on the fiat of the sovereign. The ministerial and Tory party was generalled by the capable and upright Perceval, but there was a rift between the two sections of his colleagues: the imperious Wellesley, Canning, and Castlereagh sought to prosecute a vigorous war policy, and to emancipate the Catholics; Eldon, Liverpool, and Sidmouth were obstinate for repression at home and "muddling on" abroad.

Perceval, more dexterous than the Whigs, purchased royal approval by his proposals for the additional revenue to be granted to the Regent, the Queen, and the Princesses, and the Prince, self-indulgent and averse from taking trouble, was easily persuaded by Queen Charlotte and Lady Hertford, in alliance, that it was safer to keep the old Ministers in office.

The decision appeared to augur at all events not ill for the Princess. Eldon and Perceval had been her able counsellors in 1806, and the latter was firmly convinced of her innocence, "pure as unriven snow."[1] During the debates on the increased royal incomes in March and April 1811, Whitbread, always ready to speak for the oppressed, asked why the minister did not mention the Princess of Wales when he was so anxious to provide well for all the rest of the royal family. Perceval made then the clearest assertion of his continued conviction of the innocence of her Royal Highness from the whole of the charges formerly levelled at her, and added that he should always be ready to make the same statement. At the close of 1811 that acute observer Ward wrote: "I hardly think he [the Prince] will attack the Princess. No ministry will like to add such a troublesome business to the difficulties with which they must at any rate be encumbered. Besides, his conduct would form in the eyes of the public such an excuse for hers that I very much doubt

[1] Dudley, "Letters to Ivy."

whether any strong measure would be popular. It would be droll enough to see H.R.H. standing upon the *moral ground* with the Tories at his back."

Caroline had not sought Whitbread's assistance. She had as great a horror as Queen Charlotte of seeing herself made a figure in party politics. When Canning in 1803 had wished to obtain for her an increase of income, and had come to ascertain her wishes, she had earnestly forbidden him to bring her name before the House of Commons in any contentious manner. She preferred, she said, to lose the possible increase of revenue. But whatever may have been the intentions of the ministers, Caroline was from the beginning of the Regency subjected to all sorts of annoyance. It was intimated to her that she would have to remove from the apartments in Kensington Palace. She found nobles and ladies of fashion whom she had hitherto reckoned among her friends (*e.g.*, Lady Harrowby, the Duchess of Beaufort, Lady Buckinghamshire) declining her invitations and avoiding her presence, even to the point of abruptly leaving any company in which they happened to find her. Worst of all, her intercourse with Princess Charlotte was constantly interrupted. The young Princess was often under the harsh ward of her grandmother, and Caroline was told that the Queen had declared that "if the Princess of Wales had the impertinence" to come to Windsor, Lady de Clifford ought to have the power to turn her out. The Princess of Wales, being told that Princess Charlotte's health made it impossible for her to drive to Blackheath, did in September go to Windsor, and was refused admission to her child. She was only seen by the Queen, who absolutely refused to listen to her requests.

Queen Charlotte afterwards stated that Caroline had come to "demand a house" which the King had once talked of giving her, but this does not seem to be true. "Though I begged hard," wrote Caroline, "the Regent

and the stony-hearted old Queen would not let me see her—to tell you God's truth, I know not how long I shall be able to go on bearing all my sorrows."

The catastrophe which broke up the Ministry was a grave blow to the Princess of Wales. In May 1812 Perceval was assassinated. A letter late in the evening brought her the news. She turned pale and, covering her face with her hands, exclaimed, "Oh! something dreadful has happened; I cannot read it aloud." "I have lost my best friend," she said, "I know not where to look for another: though even he was changed towards me since he had become one of the ministers. Whoever is in power becomes more or less the creature of the Prince,[1] and of course less friendly to me. No, no, there is no more society for me in England. . . . No, I repeat it, as long as dat man lives [the Regent] les choses vont de mal en pire for me—for whoever comes in to serve him, even dose calling themselves my friends, are just the same, they will set me aside and worship the Regent. Enfin, I have had patience for seventeen years, and I conclude I must for seventeen years longer."[2]

Perceval's death seemed to revive the hopes of the Whig party, but the Princess, who knew her husband's character, maintained from the first that he would never have sufficient energy to change his ministers: "He will merely get in Lord Wellesley, or some such person, to plaister up the rent which this great man's death has made," she said. And the Regent, who had treated Perceval like a footman and found little to choose between Wellesley pride and Grenville pride, "plaistered" the Ministry together under the lead of Liverpool (son of George III's factotum) who for more than half of his twenty years in Parliament, says his panegyrist, had

[1] No man, said Sir S. Romilly, could enter the Prince's service without consenting to "a total sacrifice of honour and character."

[2] Lady C. Campbell, "Diary," vol. i, p. 96.

been "in the confidential service of the Crown," and was scarcely disposed by his own or his father's traditions to offer any very stout resistance to the personal wishes of royalty. Of the other leading ministers, Eldon was now serving the Regent with the same official devotion which he had formerly consecrated to George III: Sidmouth, afraid of everything, sought on principle to suppress anybody who disturbed the safety of stagnation: Castlereagh, intent on high politics, had already shown himself, as he was, rather later, to show himself again, careless of abstract principle or individual justice when these hindered his wider schemes. The Ministry, at first derided on all hands as weak, was kept in office for fifteen years by Liverpool's skill[1] in compromising divergent interests without compromising himself. And the most important interest to conciliate was the Regent's.

Perhaps it was hardly for the Regent's ministers to thwart him in a personal matter if they could find any plausible method of gratifying him. In a contest between himself and his wife no public interests were involved. It might be thought that even if the case were prejudged no serious injustice would be done. The personal reputation of the two parties seemed, in the opinion of the West End of the town—superciliously ignorant of any other public opinion—not very dissimilar. Noblemen in the first circles of fashion (from Carmarthen to Dudley) sometimes treated their wives with a brutality commonly attributed only to the proverbial collier. The Princess was certainly unpleasant, vulgar, and ridiculous. She had no political importance at home or abroad. The Queen and the Princesses, those models of domestic virtue, would not "cut" her without cause, and a shadow had rested over her character since 1806. The Prince—liar, bully, and coward, gambler and swindler, drunkard,

[1] See Note IV at end.

sensualist, hypocrite—at all events possessed the grand manner whenever he chose to air it. And by this time his character, through long familiarity, was become a topic rather of mirth than of indignation. No one dressed better, he set the fashions, and he could still be quite charming when he chose. The Prince, besides, possessed his father's talent for intrigue and he had able servants. He had thrown over the Whig "friends of my early youth," and forgotten his leanings towards Roman Catholic Relief, and it would ill become the ministers who had benefited thereby to contend against their master's most cherished personal sentiment for the sake of meting out a degree more or less of justice to a woman who could at most be a temporary embarrassment.

Nor need the Prince or his ministers fear much from the Opposition. Caroline's worst injury had been inflicted at the hands of Grenville. Grey, aristocratic and virtuous, was far superior to championing an absurd cause or appealing to mob support, nor did the party wish on a personal point to offend the Regent, whose ministers they hoped to become. Caroline herself had no aptitude for political intrigue. Her champions in the Houses were not men with a solid following behind them, but the "radical" section of Opposition, almost ostentatiously ignored by the aristocratic Whig leaders: Erskine, the opponent of the Orders in Council, and the protagonist of the Catholic claims and of tortured animals; Wilberforce, the champion of the slaves; Burdett, who demanded freedom of speech and a free press, and Whitbread, Grey's patronized brother-in-law—a Quixote, a philanthropist, an agitator, a brewer—were, as it appeared, her self-elected defenders. The coast seemed more than usually clear for the Prince's campaign.

By the end of 1812 the Princess had been almost wrought to distraction by hints and threats, publication in the papers of forged letters purporting to come from

herself, and, above all, by the interruption in Charlotte's visits. But her principal advisers now were Brougham and Whitbread, strenuous members of the Opposition in the House of Commons, keen to try a fall with the Regent's ministers and satisfied of a tacit approval from the acknowledged leaders of their party, and they stiffened her to a determination to resist the harshness which was now making her own life and her daughter's wellnigh unbearable.

On 13th January 1813 she sent a long letter of remonstrance to the Prince: it was returned to her unopened. She sent it next to Liverpool and Eldon, desiring them to lay it before the Regent: it was returned to her. On the 17th she wrote to Liverpool to ask why she was the only subject forbidden to petition the sovereign, and required him to present her letter as a petition. No answer was vouchsafed until, after a week's delay and two letters of inquiry, the Princess was informed that her letter had been read to the Prince but that he had not directed any reply. The only step left untried seemed to be an appeal to the public; and on 10th February, without, it seems, waiting for Brougham's final assent, Caroline suddenly sent the letter to the "Morning Chronicle," which published it immediately.

It was an unlucky moment to have chosen, for Liverpool had just promised Princess Charlotte that she should be allowed to go to see her mother on the 11th, and the publication of this letter provided her father with an excuse for forbidding the visit, "by the advice of his confidential servants," wrote Liverpool. The Regent, moreover, seized the opportunity to demand from the Cabinet an official opinion, "whether the intercourse between the Princess of Wales and Princess Charlotte should continue subject to restraint," and he laid before them the evidence collected by the secret Commission of 1806. The Cabinet, "thinking perhaps that it would be better

to do nothing, but unable to resist his commands upon them to consider the education of the Princess Charlotte," sat to consider this evidence. They were reinforced by the presence of three archbishops and the Bishop of London, six judges, and the Speaker (Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester).

The real opinions of the principal lawyers present are interesting. Eldon (who had signed the 1807 acquittal) reminded his colleagues that *all* the charges made in 1806 were "either contradicted or rested on evidence wholly undeserving of credit." Privately he assured Lord Grey[1] that he believed that the Princess knew herself guilty and was frightened; that she was, in fact, more fortunate than innocent.

Ellenborough[2] declared that though there had not been enough evidence to convict he was morally convinced that the charges were true.

Erskine (one of the four who had signed the 1806 half-acquittal) was as certain of her innocence as Ellenborough was of her guilt.

Romilly considered her "brazen" in demanding publicity, holding that the publication of the evidence (of 1806) would *destroy her reputation* for ever, and therefore that she could not be serious in her demand.

Speaker Abbot held that this evidence was incredible from its inconsistency and absurdity.

The Cabinet simply answered the Regent's query in the affirmative: in their opinion it was desirable that the intercourse between the Princess and her daughter "should continue to be subject to regulation and restriction": it was a kind of open verdict, and provided no reply to Caroline's complaint that her daughter was kept away altogether; but it is difficult to see what else they could have done, for the education and discipline

[1] Surtees, "Sketch of Lives of Stowell and Eldon."
[2] Colchester's Memoirs.

of his daughter were by law the concern of the Prince alone.

To Caroline the fact that the proceedings of 1806 had once more been laid before a private Commission seemed to compel action. Constant allusions in the newspapers inflamed her own and the public excitement, and rendered vain the ministerial yearning to shelve the matter, and at the beginning of March she addressed a letter of protest to the Speaker and the Chancellor, which she requested might be read to their respective Houses.

The Speaker followed the rule for such cases in general, asked whether the House would hear the letter, and, in response to the Members' shouts, read it—for which the Regent sent him a severe reprimand by the mouth of Castlereagh. The Chancellor, conceiving, as he said, that his duty forbade him to read it, returned the letter to the Princess with the advice, "from considerations of propriety as well as safety," not to make it public. Caroline's communication briefly stated that she had learned that members of the Privy Council had been secretly considering a case against her, and that she threw herself upon Parliament for a full investigation: "her only desire is that she may either be treated as innocent or proved to be guilty."

The final effect was to produce, on 5th March, a great debate in the House of Commons, and the general public indignation at the treatment lately awarded to the Princess of Wales and Princess Charlotte was heightened by the proceedings. Castlereagh, as leader of the House of Commons, had three times refused, on technical grounds, to take any notice of questions till he was compelled by a noble speech from Whitbread to make some defence of the Government and the Regent. Then he quibbled, fenced, impugned Whitbread's candour, vituperated the Princess's letter, and displayed a great deal of lofty in-

dignation. Whitbread had demanded that in the merest justice either Lady Douglas should be prosecuted for perjury or the Princess brought to trial: Castlereagh replied that the Douglases could not possibly be proceeded against, not solely by reason of legal rules (by which in truth, as they knew, they were completely defended) but because the public mind ought not to be poisoned by a consideration of such indelicate matters—a statement received with considerable derision. Finally, the Minister contrived almost in the same breath to pour contempt on "the degraded and guilty heads" of Sir John and Lady Douglas, and to imply the worst of their victim: he said: "if every shade in the conduct of the Princess of Wales, from the highest degree of guilt down to the lowest levity, were to be considered, this House is certainly not the place," etc.

The very day before he made this haughty statement some of the Cabinet had been examining Sir John Douglas (now a major-general) by the orders and on the behalf of the Regent.

Was not the minister so zealous for the public innocence aware—Whitbread asked—that the newspapers were teeming with paragraphs and extracts tending to libel the Princess of Wales? It was the fact that all "the Carlton House papers" and those in the ministerial interest were printing the foulest accusations, and that McMahon and others of the Prince's back-stairs agents had attempted to bribe the editors of other papers to put scandalous statements in their columns. Among the slanders and insults appeared those portions of the evidence of 1806 which had been against the Princess, a proceeding which entailed the instant publication, on her behalf, of the *whole* of that evidence, which, first printed in the "Morning Herald" (13th and 15th March), was immediately reissued in book form, and thus, after all, the public were put in possession of "The Book" origin-

ally compiled by Perceval and suppressed by his Ministry at enormous expense.

"The Book" flew like wildfire over the country, and produced an almost unanimous explosion of feeling sufficiently startling alike to the leaders and to the dignified Whig opponents of the Government. "A sad bustle about the *Wales* business," sighed Mrs. Fitzherbert's not ungratified friends. The debates had gone on with increasing excitement through March, and though the various motions proposed were all withdrawn, it was clear that the feeling of the House was by no means with the Ministers, and that no proceedings could be based upon the evidence collected in 1806. All over the country the brilliant indictment of Whitbread and the weak defence of Castlereagh was acclaimed as a triumph for the Princess, and the opportunity was seized to make a great demonstration. The City of London drew up an address congratulating her on her triumph over her enemies, and upon its presentation the universal enthusiasm, from the Lord Mayor to the mob, might, had she chosen it, have created such a demonstration as to justify Eldon's anxiety for "safety" in a sense other than he had meant to hint. The Regent prudently betook himself out of town early in the morning. But thanks to Caroline's good sense no disturbance took place.

Addresses now poured in from counties and cities all over the kingdom, from Pembroke to Middlesex; but the Princess would only receive them privately, with a reticence which proved in this moment of triumph how sincere was her wish to avoid being made an instrument of party or faction. She was acting with absolute propriety. A good many of the nobility called on her to express their sympathy, and the Dukes of Sussex, Kent, and Gloucester, and Princess Sophia of Gloucester, showed themselves publicly with her. She even appeared with the Gloucester party at a

fête given by the Duke of York, who usually endeavoured to keep aloof from his eldest brother's private quarrels.

The most painful result, however, was a seeming coldness in Princess Charlotte. It was said that her friend, Miss Mercer Elphinstone,[1] was instrumental in the Regent's hands in persuading her that her mother's folly or misconduct made it undesirable for Charlotte to pledge herself completely to her cause. It is also known that newspapers with the vilest accounts of the Princess of Wales were given to her daughter to read, by the direct order of the Prince of Wales. He caused her to be told that the investigation might end "very seriously indeed" for the Princess of Wales, and Charlotte, in grief and perhaps in some alarm, at first refused to go out of doors while the debates were proceeding. She was, of course, forbidden to visit her mother, but one day their carriages met in the Park (by design apparently), and amid a sympathetic crowd mother and daughter held a brief conversation. The restrictions upon them were slightly relaxed when the popular demonstrations had given the Regent pause. When the Duchess of Brunswick died (23rd March) Charlotte was sent to visit her mother, and they met on a few other occasions; but the young Princess was soon carried off to Windsor, and in the autumn Caroline wrote sadly: "On November 5th it will be three months that I have not seen my daughter, though I receive almost every day a letter from her, yet the great caution that is necessary makes the intercourse difficult and more unpleasant." It seems that the Duchess of Leeds, good sleepy woman, though too timid actively to help Charlotte, was not disposed to be vigilant, and it was not difficult to smuggle a correspondence conducted

[1] Daughter of Lord Keith, an intimate friend of several of the royal family, often called Miss Mercer, being heiress of her mother's great wealth, afterwards Comtesse Flahault.

not by Caroline alone, but by a more artful counsellor, Brougham.[1]

During the Christmas of 1813 Charlotte, now nearly eighteen, was at last formally "brought out," was introduced, at a dinner-party made for the occasion, to the Prince of Orange, selected by the Prince Regent for her husband, was pressed at once for her answer, and was confirmed—all within ten days. She was forbidden to tell the Princess of Wales of her engagement, but very soon felt that in this case real duty constrained her to disobey her father, and she wrote to tell her mother. Caroline's reply "was short and very good-natured to me." Certainly Caroline used no influence against the engagement. She was well aware that the Prince's avowed intention of treating his daughter as a child, or rather as a slave, until she was married was no empty threat. "While I live she must be subject to me as she is at present, if she were thirty or forty or five and forty," he said to Miss Knight, and if Caroline also knew that the unnatural father himself countenanced the spread of slanderous reports against his daughter, she may well have felt that an early marriage was Charlotte's sole way of escape from an unfit home. It ought to be added that at one time the young Princess had commenced some girlish flirtation with a Captain Hesse, reputed to be one of the royal illegitimates, a man of extremely "fast" and fashionable reputation, and that her mother, by helping the young man to see Charlotte, acted very foolishly in the matter the termination whereof was due to Charlotte's sensible friend, Miss Mercer Elphinstone.

When Lord Liverpool informed Charlotte that the ban against communicating with her mother was removed (the Regent carried to an extreme the family preference for managing delicate private affairs through the Prime

[1] See "Creevey Papers."

Minister and entrusting political intrigues to the doctors), she wrote a formal letter to the Princess, but she did not confide very fully in her or endeavour to see her often, probably from fear of irritating her father. But Caroline, not unnaturally, felt hurt.

In May, however, Charlotte did confide to her mother her desire to break off the engagement. She would marry, she said, at her own choice, and some one devoted to herself and not to the royal family, for she meant to be free. "But my dear," remonstrated Caroline, "whoever you marry will become a King and you will give him a power over you." "Pho! pho! *never*," replied Charlotte, "he will only be my first subject, never my king." It was a spirit which delighted her mother.

But the insults which she herself had now to experience began to absorb Caroline's whole attention and brought to a head her long-cherished hope of escaping from daily pain and worry by leaving England.

The Peace of Paris, which in 1814 consigned Napoleon to Elba, appeared to have closed the great war and reopened the gates of travel. It was of course celebrated by every kind of rejoicing and signalized by the famous visit to England of the Tsar, the King of Prussia, and a galaxy of minor princes, generals, and ministers. Among the first ceremonials announced were two Drawing Rooms to be held by the old Queen in June, when it was supposed that Princess Charlotte would be presented. The Queen suddenly wrote to the Princess of Wales that as the Regent intended to be present and as he had formed "the unalterable resolution of never meeting her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales on any occasion either public or private," she must decline to receive her at either of the Drawing Rooms. This was a repetition of the ostracism of 1806, and at one stroke excluded Caroline from every assemblage, royal, public, or fashionable, besides being equivalent to a

condemnation of her character. It was impossible to expect that the Princess should acquiesce quietly, but the remonstrance she addressed to the Queen was ineffectual, and though she sent their correspondence to the Speaker, and it was read by the clerk to the House, little further could be said or done. If the Regent and the Queen chose to blast the character of the Princess and exile her from society she had no remedy, and her publication of the letters in the newspapers naturally only provoked the royal family still more.[1] The final result, thanks to the personal efforts of the Regent (which he afterwards unblushingly denied), was that the royal visitors ignored the Princess of Wales, although she sent the customary polite greeting to the King of Prussia, in whose service her father had fallen, and in whose army her brother was serving. Twice the poor Princess was told that the Tsar was on his way to call upon her, and she prepared to receive him, but he never came, and she almost wept with mortification.

The populace were quick to resent the treatment accorded to the Princess of Wales, and when Princess Charlotte drove out the crowd, who always cheered her, would cry "God bless you—don't desert your mother!" The Regent, except when protected by the presence of his royal guests, could not appear without a storm of hisses and groans, and when the City made a splendid entertainment to the allied sovereigns his carriage was beset by a threatening mob crying out "Where's your wife?" His susceptibilities, indeed, received so serious a shock on this occasion that he never again during his life ventured within the precincts of the City.

[1] They were at once printed also in pamphlet form, with a frontispiece representing the marriage ceremony at the point when the Prince was promising to "Love her, comfort her, and forsake all other, etc."

During all the time, too, Caroline was plagued with constant recommendations from Whitbread and Brougham and their party to play whatever part would best serve their political manœuvres—to go to St. Paul's, or not to go to the theatre, to drive in the Park, to avoid the Opera, and so forth—and she felt the humiliation of her position. "What signify," she cried, "whether I come in before or after the Regent, or whether I am applauded in his hearing or not? That is all for the gratification of *the party*, not for *my* gratification; 'tis of no consequence to the Princess but to Mr. Whitbread—and that's the way things always go and always will until I can leave this vile country."

The prospect of peace to be thus obtained came nearer when Castlereagh, the Prince's chief supporter among the ministers in his intention of getting rid of his wife,[1] and now as keen to have her out of the country as she could be to leave it, sent the Princess word, in the most decorous manner, that the Ministry were about to propose in the Commons that her Royal Highness should be placed in possession of her dower of £50,000 a year. She read the letter without signs of either surprise or joy, and handed it to her ladies, saying quietly, "C'est mon droit." She regarded it as the first recognition of her rights. Her brief satisfaction was spoiled by Brougham and Whitbread, who assured her that it was an "insidious" and "unhandsome" offer meant to injure her. For the Opposition in the House of Commons, manœuvred by Brougham, Whitbread, Creevey, and others from whom the lofty Grey and Grenville took care ostensibly to hold aloof, wanted her to refuse the income offered, and to remain in England, as their weapon wherewith to stir up a popular movement against Regent and ministers. She saw well enough that they

[1] *Cf.* Alison's Lives of Lord Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart. Castlereagh was nephew of Lady Hertford and cousin of Yarmouth.

cared only for party tactics, and determined to act for herself. "It is not *in* me," she said, truly enough, to Lady Charlotte Campbell, "to suspect evil till I see it plainly, only to be guarded against it. If de Princess refuse they will say 'What de devil does de woman want? We cannot make her husband like her or make de Queen receive her, but we can set de seal upon all our public doings of last year by settling upon her a sufficient sum to enable her to hold the rank of Princess of Wales.' I will therefore accept—I will, I will do it myself," and she instantly did.

Whitbread, however, constrained her to add that she requested the House only to grant her £35,000, by telling her that the acceptance of the larger sum would entail remaining in England, to keep up her position. Perhaps the encomiums which greeted the Princess's generous and modest reply justified Whitbread's advice, but Caroline was somewhat rueful at the sacrifice and at the interference. "I know not who plagues me most, my friends or my enemies," she said.

Though she appreciated the popularity which she had in youth desired, Caroline did nothing to bid for it. The Government party and the fashionable sneered at the general affection for her, and insinuated most untruly that she manœuvred for it. It was not intentionally that she roused excitement by her celebrated appearance at the Opera when all the royal visitors were there in state, and she was cheered by the house in the face of all. Her suite entreated her to rise and make the usual curtsey of acknowledgement, but she sat immovable, and at last said to one of them, "My dear, Punch's wife is nobody when Punch is present." They laughed, but thought her mistaken. "We shall be hissed," said Sir William Gell. "No, no," again replied the Princess with infinite good humour, "I know my business better than to *take the morsel out of my husband's mouth*; I am not to seem to

know that the applause is meant for me till they call my name." Sure enough, the Prince took the applause to himself, rose and bowed to the audience, who with great self-control desisted from further demonstration till he had left, when with shouts they made their meaning quite clear. The Princess then duly acknowledged the plaudits and withdrew, but only to meet with further homage outside. Some of the mob asked if they should burn Carlton House: "No, my good people," she said, "be quite quiet—let me pass, and go home to your beds," but they accompanied her carriage home with shouts, "Long live the Princess of Wales; long live the innocent," etc.

The Prince's retort was to make the management of the Opera inform the Princess, on the next occasion of her wishing to be present, that all the boxes were engaged; and in the same mode she was prevented from being present at the Thanksgiving Service in St. Paul's for the declaration of Peace. Even the members of the royal family used her to air their differences with the Regent. She had contrived to assert herself by visiting the Vauxhall fête in honour of the victory of Vittoria, and it was supposed to be from spite to the Prince that the Dukes of Kent and Gloucester were seen handing her round the walks and into her carriage, although the Queen's arrival was imminent. The Regent, who had tried his usual methods of preventing the Princess from appearing, this time in vain, stayed away himself, and the general opinion of Society is stated to have been "that it was impudent in the Princess to go and pusillanimous in the Prince to stay away."

Incessant worry, excitement, disappointment, and insult were breaking Caroline's nerve. She could not continue to endure her misery, nor did she know how to avoid the humiliating part assigned to her by the Opposition leaders in the House of Commons save by actual

flight from the country. But it was no sudden idea. She had thought, even in 1799, and again in 1805, of retiring to Brunswick if she could not be treated properly by the royal family, and now that she had finally determined on it she could think of nothing else. Even the announcement by Princess Charlotte that she had broken off her engagement with the Prince of Orange gave her no pause.

Princess Charlotte had been alarmed by the Regent's evident haste to have her married and out of the country. She was disappointed and offended by being still kept in a schoolroom privacy while her young betrothed was made much of by the royal company, and the Prince of Orange himself did not improve upon acquaintance. She disliked his rough, boyish ways, and doubted his sincerity, and the silence preserved as to the terms of her marriage contract gave her but too just cause for suspicion of her father, the Ministry, and her future husband. In vain she demanded a pledge that she should not be obliged to dwell in the Netherlands. She realized that she had made a mistake in accepting this engagement, "as much brought about by *force* as anything, and by deceit and hurry," she declared, and she had the courage, in the middle of June, to announce that she had broken it off. No influence, certainly, was used in this direction by the Princess of Wales, though Brougham[1] possibly encouraged the step; whatever intrigues Russian or radical plotters might endeavour to spin about it the breach was essentially of her own making,[2] and it is unnecessary to find any mystery in the matter. Charlotte conducted with wonderful ability and self-control a single-handed contest with her father, the Duke of York, the Prince of Orange, and Lord Liverpool, and she made some use of the Opposition by informing Whitbread of

[1] See "Creevey Papers," vol. i, ch. ix.

[2] See Lady R. Weigall, Miss Knight, "Fifty Years."

her action, in order, as she stated, to ensure that she should not be forcibly silenced and suppressed by her father.

The Regent was furious. He summoned her to his presence (12th July), overwhelmed her with abuse, told her that the whole of her household were dismissed and must that night depart, and that her new attendants, a small company of strangers, were actually waiting in the next apartment to take her to Cranborne Lodge in Windsor Park, where she would be permitted neither visits nor letters. Charlotte asked to retire to her own room, snatched up a bonnet and shawl, ran down stairs and into the street, hailed a hackney coach and drove to Connaught Place to take refuge with her mother. Caroline was not there, but was fetched as quickly as possible. When she came she appeared to be appalled by the catastrophe. It is difficult to see what she could have done. She could but have appealed to Parliament and to the public to protect her daughter and herself from the Regent's domestic tyranny, which would probably have produced a terrible riot, and placed her wholly in the wrong. The Regent was within his rights. Anxiously Caroline sent hither and thither to find counsellors, till at length a sort of unofficial cabinet was assembled, reinforced by the Duke of York, the Chancellor, and the Chief Justice. The great men negotiated and argued half the night, while Charlotte sat upstairs with her mother, Miss Mercer, and Miss Knight, and at last, at three in the morning, she yielded to the prayers and advice of all, and consented to let the Duke of York take her back to Carlton House. Brougham said that when he was obliged to tell her that she could not legally refuse to go back to her father, the effect upon her was so dreadful that he felt as if he had pronounced sentence of death on a prisoner.[1]

[1] Miss Knight, vol. ii, p. 17.

She was promptly carried off to Cranbourne Lodge and there treated as a prisoner, watched day and night. Her health and spirits gave way, but in spite of a medical recommendation that she should have sea air, it was not until the "Morning Chronicle" in October published this advice and asked a pertinent question that she was allowed to go to Weymouth. For a year and a half this semi-imprisonment lasted, at Carlton House, Weymouth, or Windsor, friends and letters interdicted, and no interests permitted but a few lessons, books, and occasional visits under strictest guard to the play and the opera. It is no wonder that she became ailing, thin, and nervous. She started if a door opened hastily or a sudden step was heard, and turned pale and looked scared if she saw two persons talking aside whose conversation she could not hear. When Miss Mercer was at last allowed to see her she urged Charlotte to confide in one of her attendants (in Mrs. Campbell, said that lady). "My dear Margaret," replied Charlotte, "till I choose for *myself* the people that are to be about me I never will speak but of matters of fact, for I cannot and will not submit to have people chosen for me, not even angels from heaven." Unfortunately Mrs. Campbell (the subgoverness whom Charlotte had liked) was listening in the next room and repeated all this to the princesses. "It shows a sad, obstinate spirit," was Augusta's sole comment.[1]

From this condition of dreary and hopeless durance Charlotte was rescued in the spring of 1816 by the appearance of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. And seldom can a royal suitor have been in his bride's eyes a more perfect champion of romance. On 2nd May 1816 they were married, and Charlotte entered upon her one brief spell of happiness. The Regent was gratified to

[1] Harcourt Papers, vol. vi.

find that happiness did what injustice had never accomplished. His daughter lived quietly and privately in her country house at Claremont with the husband of her choice, and scarcely ever appeared in public to derogate from the importance of her father.

She told a friend that she was so utterly happy that she felt that it surely could not last. And on 5th November 1817 the much tried, beloved Princess died. Her own life and that of her child were sacrificed to professional theories,[1] and to almost inconceivable ignorance, carelessness, and stupidity. She was left wholly in the hands of the fashionable surgeon Croft, whose jealousy forbade consultation with other physicians. His vogue was in inverse ratio to his competence, and he inflicted on the Princess a new fashionable treatment, based on a slight and vegetarian diet and much bleeding. Her old nurse, Mrs. Louis, was powerless, no one of any experience was in attendance, and the Princess died literally of exhaustion.[2]

Her death plunged the entire nation into mourning. For a fortnight the intense stillness and depression which reigned everywhere gave the conviction of national disaster. "She has been wept in every cottage and her loss has not *yet* been thought of as a political calamity, it has come so near every heart as a private sorrow," says Mrs. Trench.

One of the last letters which Charlotte wrote was to a friend abroad who had mentioned to her the steady attendance of Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Holland upon the Princess of Wales, then wandering upon the continent: "I have it not in my power," she wrote, "at present to repay any services to the Princess of Wales but if ever I have, those who remain steadfast to her shall not be forgotten by me, . . . I refrain from making pro-

[1] Stockmar.

[2] Princess Augusta in Harcourt Papers, Lady R. Weigall, etc.

fessions of gratitude but I do not feel them the less towards all those who show her kindness. I have not heard from my mother for a long time. If you can give me any intelligence of her I shall be obliged to you to do so."

CHAPTER V

EXILE—THE QUEEN'S TRIAL—THE END

ON the 16th of August 1814 the Princess of Wales left England, to the immense relief of her husband [1] and the ministers, but amid the apprehensions of her best friends, who feared that in foreign countries she would cast off all restraint and become a byword for some folly which might prevent her from returning to England under happier auspices. No one could say, but every one knew that only on her husband's death could she hope to reappear. The accession of her daughter to the throne would certainly ensure a fitting place beside it for her mother, and it ought to be Caroline's aim so to conduct herself as not to forfeit that future haven. She had seemed to understand this in former days. "I never wish to be Queen of England," she would say. "The Queen's mother is enough for me."

But latterly she had lost all sense of perspective and appeared to live only for the present moment.

Charlotte had been allowed to come to Worthing to say good-bye, and her mother believed that she saw in her a disposition to accept her own seclusion or imprisonment contentedly. How far this was from the truth all the accounts of the poor young Princess may show. Caroline saw what she wanted to see. She could not,

[1] He is said on the eve of her departure to have given as the toast: "To the Princess of Wales's d——n and may she never return to England."

however, have done Charlotte any good by staying, and may reasonably have hoped that her own departure would cause more leniency towards her daughter. She had asked permission to resign to her the Rangership, Montagu House, and the town house which the Duchess of Brunswick had bequeathed to her, but the Regent replied that though she could certainly resign anything she chose he should not grant Charlotte the Rangership, nor ever allow her to inhabit any house formerly inhabited by the Princess of Wales.

The politicians who had adopted her cause as a lever against the ministers were terribly annoyed at her "desertion" of them, as Brougham and Whitbread termed it, and they accused Canning of treachery to her and the party, because he would not help them to dissuade her. The more detached Ward laughed at the "dear, disinterested patriots." Did they really think, he asked, that it was faithless to persuade "this poor woman, who it is evident can never pass one hour of peace and happiness on this island, to retire to some spot where she may be free from vexation and disappointment?"

She embarked at Lancing, for the sake of privacy—shipping had not yet deserted the little ports—but nevertheless seemed to court observation by her peculiar costume, and the air of mystery with which she paraded her concern about a particular tin case. With her went the lad Willie Austin, and a sufficient suite: Ladies Charlotte Lindsay and Elizabeth Forbes, Sir William Gell, Colonel St. Leger, Keppel Craven, Captain Hesse, and Dr. Holland. They were attended by the steady old steward, Siccard, half-a-dozen German servants, and an English coachman.

She was received very pleasantly in Brunswick by her brother and the inhabitants, and for a fortnight was as merry and active as if keeping the carnival. Her suite were exhausted by the round of amusements—theatres,

suppers, dances, masquerades. She turned night into day and carried out any freak which came into her head, such as extemporizing a ball at midnight and rousing musicians and guests from their beds. She invented a strange new costume (comprising gaily embroidered coats and waistcoats, plumed hats and moustaches) for her unfortunate gentlemen, which may have had its effect on Col. St. Leger, who resigned his post as chamberlain and returned to England, as did Lady Charlotte Lindsay.

A fortnight's mirth exhausted Brunswick for the restless Princess, who wandered on by Frankfort, Strassburg, Bern, and Lausanne to Geneva, where she found royal society in the ex-Empress Marie Louise of Austria, and a Saxe-Coburg princess, sister of Leopold, separated from her husband, the savage Russian Grand Duke Constantine. The three royal ladies were merry together, and the Princess horrified the English residents by appearing at a masked ball as Venus in a remarkably scanty costume. She soon passed on, however, and reached Milan in October.

Lady Elizabeth Forbes now left her service, as well as Gell and Craven, and she set about supplying their places with Italians. An ex-soldier named Bartolommeo Bergami was recommended to her by the Marquis Ghislieri and the Austrian General Pino as an exceptionally suitable courier for the lengthy tour she was contemplating. Bergami bore an excellent character, his appearance and manners were above those usual among couriers, indeed he claimed, and very likely with truth, to be of gentle descent, though driven by poverty to a humble calling.

The ensuing winter and spring Caroline spent at Naples, where the pinchbeck royalty of King Joachim Murat and his court quite suited her taste. She conceived a great admiration for the handsome *parvenu*, who on

his part addressed her as "Madame, ma chère, chère sœur," and they were very royal and recklessly gay until the catastrophe of the Hundred Days made an end of Murat's kingship.

The rest of 1815 was spent at Rome, where the Pope showed the Princess every politeness—so that the English papers reported that she had become a Roman Catholic—at Genoa, Milan, Venice, and on the Lakes. At Venice Dr. Holland at last left her; Hesse had already been summoned to his regiment when war broke out, and Caroline, after inducing first Lady Glenbervie and then Lady Charlotte Campbell to act temporarily as ladies-in-waiting, resolved to replace her lost suite by Italians, since she could not find English people willing to come with her. She always made the mistake of applying to persons of such rank and position as made them unwilling to exchange their independence for the wandering and uncomfortable life of the Princess, while she discouraged several who would have been willing to come with her because she did not think them sufficiently well born, and thus a Mr. William Burrell, relative of Lord Gwydir and Lady Willoughby d'Eresby, who had travelled in her company, was offended by her refusal of his proffered services. At Naples she had taken Bergami's sister, Countess Oldi, as her lady-in-waiting, and Murat at her request gave the courier, now her equerry, a captaincy in the army.

She sent to England for Lieutenant Hownham (spelt also Hownam, or Hannam), one of the boys whom she had in earlier days adopted, and who now came on her summons, and remained with her on her travels. A respectable Italian gentleman of Cremona, Chevalier Chiavini, became her equerry, and Dr. Mochetti, a professor of standing, her physician. Bergami she named her chamberlain, a position necessarily of familiarity as well as of trust. In the Villa d'Este, as she named her fine

house on Lake Como, the Princess led a bizarre existence of unusual and often expensive amusement. Her manners, her costumes, her coarse or wild way of talking, her intimacy with Bergami and his family (she was devoted to his daughter Victorine, whom she carried about with her everywhere) and the large sums which she apparently bestowed upon them, made her establishment much talked of. In the autumn, when she betook herself to visit Elba and Sicily, the captain of her English yacht, Pechell, refused to treat Bergami as a gentleman, having formerly dealt with him as her servant, and Caroline in wrath dismissed him and the "Clorinda," and hired an Italian vessel, the subsequently famous polacca. To prevent such an awkward mistake from recurring she somehow "obtained for" her chamberlain the rank of a "Knight of Malta," and he, having of late purchased lands near Milan, assumed the style of "Baron della Francina," whether justifiably or not no uninformed Englishman could possibly decide.

After this the errant Princess's adventures became more remarkable. She sailed to Tunis, and there stayed for some time, delighted with the politeness of the Bey, until the approach of Exmouth's squadron, about to destroy that nest of pirates, compelled her departure, just in time to escape being seized as a hostage. She next set out (April 1816) for the East, and hurried through Greece, Constantinople, Ephesus, Jerusalem, and other famous places with a speed and a disregard of danger, discomforts, and conventions, extremely startling in those leisurely and aristocratic days.

On the way she invented, or "founded" a new order of knights, and invested Willie Austin and Baron della Francina with it as "Knights of St. Caroline." By the autumn she was back again on Lake Como, and again annoyed English visitors and scandalized local magnates by her unseemly festivities at Villa d'Este, or at Ber-

gami's villa near Milan, or in Rome (where she was rude to the Pope), or at Pesaro.

In the spring of 1817 she set forth to raid the northern kingdoms, appeared at Innsbrück and at Carlsruhe, an embarrassment to kind-hearted royalties, and rebuffed by others. Her appearance was extraordinary, and that of her suite, in Turkish costumes, hardly less so. "The Mad Princess" was no inapt title. The English ambassador fled from Vienna at her threat of coming to stay with him.

But the proximity of English and Hanoverian officials was chilling to the half-demented woman's hilarity, and she soon abandoned the attempt to force herself into court society, and returned to Italy.

The accounts which reached England of the extraordinary proceedings of the Princess of Wales lost nothing on the way. The story is famous of her appearance at Genoa in a costume like that of a pink pantomime fairy, drawn in a shell-like car by little circus ponies. As early as 1815, when Mr. Burrell returned from Italy, scandalous rumours were afloat, originating, it appears, in the chatter of his servant to the servants of the Duke of Cumberland in a Brussels hotel. The tales of this reputable authority, and Captain Pechell's[1] aspersions on Bergami, were eagerly repeated in Pall Mall, and the Regent once more supposed that the way was clear to divorce his hated wife.

One at least of his Cabinet was ready to aid him. Castlereagh[2] was preparing for such a step from 1815, and in January 1816 drew up clear and vigorous instructions for his brother, then ambassador at Vienna, who was given charge of the business of collecting evidence

[1] Pechell's brothers and brothers-in-law enjoyed lucrative posts or pensions. He was a witness for the Crown later.

[2] See correspondence of Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart in Alison's "Lives," vol. iii.

against the Princess. Most of Italy was under Austrian rule, and with Metternich's help it should be easy to incriminate Caroline. Castlereagh explained to Sir Charles Stewart that the main thing was to secure witnesses who would be believed in England, without implicating himself or any one in the royal service: the witnesses, or spies, must furnish such proofs "as would for ever deliver the Prince Regent of having a woman so lost to decency in the relation of a wife." Nor would any terms be offered to "such a degraded woman." People were to be set to watch her, and to get promises from those who would appear as witnesses against her.

Austria and England were close allies then, and Metternich wrote a most sympathetic reply, and so worded, without any compromising names, that a reader of the opposite party might possibly suppose it to be sarcastic. The Regent found Hanoverians to send on this secret service to Italy, one of whom, Baron Ompteda, was so well known to be a spy upon the Princess that Lady Charlotte Campbell was terrified when she invited him to dinner. He tried to bribe her servants and procured through one Crede false keys to her rooms and desks. He was, however, accidentally discovered—rumour said by Caroline herself, and Lieutenant Hownham promptly challenged him, but the Baron would not fight. His action made it possible for her to complain of him to the Governor of Milan, who desired him to quit the place —but that did not free the Princess from spies, and she grew nervous, especially when a couple of men were found lurking by her bedroom door one night. One result was to increase her confidence in the family of Bergami, with whom she felt safe, and she showered increased favours upon them.

By the autumn of 1817 a large mass of information was collected,[1] and Vice-Chancellor Leach, who for some

[1] *Cf.* Yonge's "Life of Lord Liverpool."

time had been the Regent's personal legal adviser, sifted it, and recommended getting more exact information. His opinion was laid before the Cabinet, yet the resultant "Milan Commission" was not (declared Liverpool afterwards) a *Cabinet* measure. The Commission, a secret inquiry, was arranged by Leach, with the concurrence of the Prime Minister and Chancellor (Liverpool and Eldon), while Castlereagh provided for its members special facilities, through our ambassadors at Vienna and Munich[1] in dealing with the authorities abroad. The expenses were paid by the Government, it was credibly said, to the amount of £33,000 at least.

The secret Commissioners, Colonel Browne, Cooke, Powel, and Sir Charles Stewart himself, the real, though not the ostensible chief, reached Milan in September 1818, and for the course of some months forwarded evidence to Leach, who passed it on to Liverpool and in July 1819 a report was made out and presented to the Cabinet. Encouraged by Leach, and at all events not discouraged by Castlereagh, the Regent desired his Ministers to obtain a divorce for him by some parliamentary proceeding. They demurred; he insisted. Thrice, with increasing copiousness, the embarrassed Cabinet combated their royal master's arguments, but he could not be convinced by their most earnest circumlocution that a husband with his record would only damage himself by proceeding against a wife whose tongue could not be stopped if she chose to recriminate.

The death of George III brought about the crisis. Weary of espionage and embarrassment, and unable to find any further amusement in incessant wanderings, Caroline had for some time harboured thoughts of returning to England. She had asked the Ministers for a man-of-war to bring her, but was told that no ship was at

[1] Frederick Lamb, Melbourne's brother, who took credit for having collected damaging evidence.

liberty. The shock of the death of Princess Charlotte—she had fainted again and again on hearing those dreadful tidings—seems to have intensified the wish; after all, she said, England was her only home. But she had continually put off the journey, doubtless afraid, and contented herself with sending Siccard to England that he might report to her. She was certainly aware of the Milan Commission, and of the Regent's intentions, for the nature of the evidence and report, kept in a certain *green bag*, was an open secret.

When (in December 1819) she learned that the old King was dying, Caroline sent word to Brougham that she would return to England if the *country* would protect her, but that otherwise she would prefer to spend abroad, obscure and tranquil, "the few years I am to remain upon this wild globe."

The ministers were almost as anxious to avoid a difficult position as to retain George IV's favour, and consulted Brougham on the compromise which might be effected with "the Princess of Wales," as they continued to call her, to keep her out of the country.

The precise offers suggested are variously stated.[1] Ministers were ready to give almost any income, but Caroline had never set much store upon money—and they do not at first seem to have made any sort of concession to her sense of dignity. George IV, indeed, was bent on preventing her from assuming any regal title, and this was what most galled his wife.

Brougham, it is almost certain, played all sides false. He would not go to meet the Queen, who had at once

[1] To approximate to accuracy all the accounts in the several Lives of the protagonists ought to be compared, in especial those of Canning, Liverpool, Colchester, Eldon, and Castlereagh (Alison's), as well as the reports in *Hansard* and the impressions of Lady C. Campbell, Croker, Creevey, "Fifty Years," etc. It must be remembered that every one was biased.

named him and his friend Denman the Queen's Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, dignities which Chancellor Eldon attempted to veto. She wanted him to meet her at Geneva and give his advice, but he asked her to come within reach of Calais. He posed to his friends as being in terror of her return, and certain that she would obey his advice and stay away, advice which he omitted to give. Liverpool took no steps himself, but, "marvellous to think," as Canning wrote, was taken in by Grey's professions of standing aloof from any party proceedings over the business, and all the time, "marvellous to think again, thought Brougham in earnest and plain dealing."

George IV was very ill at the moment of his father's death, and "the horror of having the Queen made an object of the prayers of his people," wrote Castlereagh, "haunted his imagination and disturbed his rest." Others put it that in his delirium he was scared by the vision of his injured wife demanding justice.

Croker plumed himself upon having made the discovery that to allow Her Majesty's name to appear in the Liturgy would be tantamount to conceding her every claim as wife or queen, and on having impressed this upon his royal master. The King, at any rate, forbade her name to be inserted, and this veto became the cardinal questioh in the struggle about to be waged. Whether the mere fiat of the King could lawfully exclude the Queen's name from the Prayer Book was a question always shelved. Ministers lamely suggested that the Queen was included in the general petitions. To which Denman retorted that if Her Majesty were included in any general prayer it was in that for the desolate and oppressed.

Caroline herself wrote to Liverpool demanding the insertion of her name in the Liturgy, a notification to all British ambassadors and consuls to acknowledge her as Queen, and the assignment of a palace on her arrival in England. To a question whether the King would com-

promise on any of these points, Castlereagh replied, "you might as well try to move Carlton House."

On her way across France Caroline found that her plight was now worsened. No longer Princess of Wales, and not announced as Queen, she was nobody, and the French minister refused her a passport, which she had to obtain from an English consul, as a private traveller, while designed affronts were offered to her during her journey.

The offer the Government finally made was a revenue of £50,000, on condition of her remaining abroad, and never taking any royal title, or attempting to exercise any royal rights (the Queen had a right to present to some seventy posts).

This offer the King (in February 1820) astutely allowed the Ministers to make on condition that if it failed they would "support the dignity of the Crown" in some other manner, a compromise which they accepted with misplaced gratitude.

Brougham put off letting her Majesty know of this offer until he met her at Calais; it was then explained to her by his companion, Lord Hutchinson, a confidential friend of the King, in somewhat arbitrary language, and she absolutely rejected the terms. Probably more weight than need be has been attached to the arguments of Alderman Wood, an ex-Lord Mayor and now an opposition M.P. yearning for notoriety, who had also taken upon himself to greet her on the French coast, to assure her of the strong feeling in England on her side, and to pose as her champion. Only the utmost tact and a complete nominal recognition of her royal status could have won her to any concession, and this Liverpool and Brougham between them had hopelessly bungled.

The coming crisis was approached characteristically by all. The King vowed to the Cabinet that unless they would get him a divorce he would call in fresh Ministers,

and if they failed, go to Hanover where he could be divorced when he chose. Thus moved, the Cabinet thought Parliament might be brought to "stamp upon her conduct the stain which the voice of Europe affixes to it," so long as they were not asked to pronounce divorce, for fear of "the dangers of a public trial in these factious times," as Castlereagh put it.

Canning sent in his resignation,[1] because, as he boldly told George IV, he had formerly been upon friendly terms with the Queen, which he felt made it impossible to join in proceedings against her. Castlereagh (with the abominable sneer that Canning "was no doubt one of the *many favoured*," and therefore must avoid appearing) wrote to his brother at Vienna to prepare the evidence.[2] Metternich must provide "the *character* and *private history*" of all the witnesses the Queen "would like to call," and if any were likely to prove important the agent, Colonel Browne, was "to send over some person to swear as to the individual so intended to be produced not being entitled to credit in a court of justice."[3]

At this very time Liverpool was trying to dissuade the King from persisting, on the ground that the Queen must have a fair trial, and might make awkward revelations, and the King, with a "God forbid" that she should not have every chance, replied that she could be forbidden to advert to anything anterior to 1814, and that the House of Lords might sit in secret and prevent any reports being printed.

The evidence had long been known to be in ministerial

[1] The King refused to accept it, but Canning withdrew to France while the trial was proceeding, and resigned afterwards. George IV attempted to exclude him from office in consequence.

[2] Castlereagh to Stewart, Alison's "Lives," vol. iii.

[3] Eventually some of Caroline's witnesses were prevented from leaving Italy by the Austrian authorities on the plea of military operations (Colchester).

hands, and was assumed to prove her Majesty guilty of misconduct.

But those behind the scenes were aware that the evidence, despite all the help which spies, bribes, and government assistance had given for three or four years, was untrustworthy. A year earlier they had pointed out that the testimony came entirely from foreigners,—artisans, hotel servants, and others of menial position who knew no English, "and some of them standing in the questionable situation of having been dismissed" from Caroline's service.[1] It would have been better, they thought, to get some English witnesses, and it was to be lamented that this was prevented by the "obstacles" of her English suite being "some of them persons of rank and station and at present in friendly correspondence with the Princess [who] profess an interest in all that concerns her, and would therefore come before any tribunal with a strong bias in her favour."[2] Moreover since 1818 it had not been possible to get spies introduced into her family, as those about her were "sufficiently interested in her having her large annuity continued to prevent any spies being introduced."

The King asserted that this did not matter, menial testimony would serve, since all the witnesses agreed, and "the nature of the facts did not admit of other testimony."

The Ministers and their party, however, persistently wrote and spoke of her as guilty—"this pestilent woman," "this abandoned woman," "this she-devil," they called her. "Her treatment will be such as she *ought* to expect." "All agree in her guilt with a small exception," announced the "Times."

But however vehement they might be, however voluminous the evidence collected by Castlereagh and his

[1] *Cf.* Stapleton's "Canning and His Times."

[2] Wilbraham to Abbot, "Diary and Correspondence of Lord Colchester."

brother, however active the intrigues of Leach's and Sir Charles Stewart's underlings, it was not true that only the lowest classes espoused the Queen's cause.

The importance of the trial lay in the fact that the general condemnation of the odious life led by George IV, as well as the widespread impatience of an aristocratic and nominated parliament and the resentment against the tyrannical repression of popular liberties which had been in vogue since 1815, were all focussed upon this effort of King and Ministers to penalize the helpless Queen, and to accomplish with the forms of law a result which the ordinary course of law could not have reached.

"All the world is with her," wrote Sir J. Macintosh, "except the people of fashion at the west end of the town."[1] At Brighton—the Regent's *sanctum*—the ladies were saying: "Well, if my husband had used me as hers has done I should have thought myself entitled to act as she has done."[2]

As Canning, self-exiled in France, and Cornewall Lewis saw, it was with most people no simple question of the guilt or innocence of Caroline herself: the spectacle of the tyranny of the strong over the weak was what moved the nation. The feeling, wrote the former, of "the better sort of the mass of mankind and womankind" was "(1st) the thing is not fit to be discussed. (2nd) *You* have no right to provoke the discussion of it."

In such a condition of feeling the arrival of the Queen herself produced the wildest excitement. She became "the only topic of talk or letters." In pursuance of the policy of insult no notice had been taken of her Majesty's demand for a yacht to bring her from Calais and for a residence in London, and she crossed in the common packet. But the greeting which awaited her on 5th June was a national demonstration. Dover Castle fired a royal

[1] Macintosh in "Croker Papers," vol. i.
[2] Hatsell to Abbot.

salute, almost the entire population appeared to be huzzaing around her carriage, and her journey to London was one long ovation. The mob decreed a general illumination, and broke the windows of the ministerial chiefs. But it was not true that her cause was only espoused by such supporters.

Of her old attendants, Lord and Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton came to attend her, and they remained with her steadily to the end. Bergami and Chevalier Vassali had returned to Italy when her English friends reached her, but Sir William Gell and Keppel Craven resumed their duties as soon as they reached London from the Continent:

> Lord Hood for a man, for a maid, Lady Anne,
> And Alderman Wood for a *beau* ma'am. Ho! ma'am,

quoth Theodore Hook.

Unfortunately, with her usual bad judgement of character, Caroline pinned great faith on Alderman Wood, and supposing him to be of much more important standing than was the fact, actually permitted him to sit by her side as she drove into London on 7th June. As she had nowhere to go she was glad to accept his hospitality for the time, and his house in South Audley Street was for two days surrounded by a dense mob, cheering and shouting continually, to which she had to keep showing herself and bowing. She soon took a house, however, at first in Portman Place, whence she removed to Brandenburg House, a mansion in Hammersmith. She did not look like a heroine; very stout, wearing a black wig with long curls hanging on both sides of her face, her eyebrows painted black, her cheeks horribly rouged, she had given to her naturally good-humoured-looking countenance an unpleasantly bold and stern expression, enhanced by wearing a large hat with a huge bow and a plume of immense ostrich feathers.

Her arrival caused the postponement of the Coronation, for the new King dared not face the certain uproar, but withdrew from London to his most private abode, "the Cottage" in Windsor Park, a costly hiding-place which enjoyed much the same kind of unsavoury reputation as other incognito resorts of royalty. He had already dropped the politically-minded Lady Hertford for the rapacious Lady Conyngham; absorbed in eating, drinking, and dressing, his gravest occupation to invent expensive paraphernalia for his coronation, he left the conduct of his divorce suit to the ministers: himself the most uniformly hated man in his dominions, and totally unaffected by opinion.

One final effort was made by the House of Commons for conciliation. Wilberforce fancied that an appeal to the Queen's generosity might succeed. He moved an address to her, which was voted by an immense majority, beseeching her, as a boon to the nation, to forbear pressing her claims: the House would interpret such a withdrawal as an act of royal graciousness, certainly not as any shrinking from inquiry, and would protect her honour and her interests generously. Ministers would in that case have made a joint address to King and Queen —thus recognizing her position—and she might have withdrawn with all the honours. But it was too late for such a compromise, and Caroline declined to listen to Wilberforce. Probably she felt the appeal an acknowledgement of her strength and was encouraged by it.

The Government naturally opened their campaign in the House of Lords, where they could count on a large majority and the whole of the King's Friends. Rather more than a month was occupied by a secret examination by the House of the evidence in the green bag, as to which the Government had a majority of fifty-five. The "Bill of Pains and Penalties" was then introduced by the Prime Minister, Liverpool, whose admirable private

character was one of the cardinal assets of the Government, and who declared that he "sincerely imbibed the conviction of her Majesty's guilt." On 17th August 1820 he brought in "An Act to deprive Her Majesty Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the title, prerogatives, rights, and privileges of Queen Consort of this realm and to dissolve the marriage between His Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth."

The proceeding was really, what it was always called, the Trial of the Queen. It pursued the course of a Bill, with three readings, but between the first and second the Government called witnesses, whom the Peers were allowed to question, to prove the reason for which alone, by the law of the land, divorce could be pronounced. The Queen's Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, Brougham and Denham, were allowed to defend her, and to cross-question witnesses as well as the Crown lawyers. The Peers were obliged to be present, unless excused by the House, and of the royal Dukes, Sussex requested and obtained leave to absent himself. Caroline's other friend, the Duke of Kent, was dead.

Her counsel told her that she ought to be present during the proceedings, or at least part of them, and on learning that she intended to be present, the authorities provided a chair of state for her. The Ministers desired Tyrwhitt, as Black Rod, not to treat her as Queen, but he insisted upon doing so, and handed her in in state. She scored the first *bon mot*: "Well, Sir Thomas," she asked him, "what is your master trying me for? Is it for intermarrying with a man whose first wife I knew to be alive?"

The first reading of the Bill passed by a very large majority. The real trial then began.[1] The Queen's

[1] *Cf.* "Fifty Years of My Life" (Lord Albemarle, the father of the writer, was in his place as a peer, George Keppel himself witnessed the proceedings, stationed close to the Queen herself); Lady

lawyers, ably seconded by Erskine, asked for a list of the witnesses and of the charges to be brought by the prosecution; this was refused, and the evidence could only be rebutted by cross-examination without preparation.

The almost universal assumption in the House of Lords was that Caroline was guilty. Everywhere it was taken for granted that the Lords would pass the Bill—though the Commons probably would not (*dare* not, said Canning). But an extraordinary change took place during the development of the ministerial charges. The mere hearing of the evidence tendered against the Queen caused a large number of peers to doubt her guilt. If, after years of collecting evidence, this paid crew of squalid foreign servants, masons, and waiters were all the Government could produce, surely her guilt could hardly be a matter of notoriety. It was reported from Como that the whole neighbourhood were anxious to be engaged as witnesses against the Queen, for the pay was 30 francs a day. Some of the peers were staggered by observing that the adoption of ordinary Italian customs—such as living in a suite of rooms which opened out of each other, receiving company in a "bedroom," giving the hand to be kissed by the servant, sitting on the flat roof of the house of an evening, etc., were brought forward (reckoning on the ignorance of a generation compelled by the long war to be insular) as "suspicious circumstances." Others commented on the parrot-like manner of recital in which some of the witnesses related a string of disgusting details without the least sign of hesitation or shame or doubt of the terms to use. It was also curious if the mass of shocking deeds Caroline was accused of committing had been perpetrated with open doors and windows, amid the coming and going of chance

Charlotte Campbell (Letters at the end of Diary), correspondence of Canning, Raikes, Colchester, Creevey Papers, etc.

waiters and artisans; and when the skilful questions of Brougham and Denman put the witnesses out of their part, and received no other reply but "non mi ricordo" (I don't remember) from those whose glib tongues had just sworn to a crowd of details, the disgust even within the House grew strong.

Outside Parliament the whole country was seething with fury. "The thousand-a-day libels and caricatures" on the King, and the violent language of the papers, startled the American ambassador, who thought ordinary prudence would lead the Ministers to drop their Bill. At Paris it was thought that England was on the verge of a revolution. Fishermen in little coast villages and country farmers were as much absorbed in the issue as politicians, and would anxiously ask visitors from town "if the House of Lords would do her Majesty justice."

"The feeling it excites," wrote an unprejudiced observer (Mrs. Richard Trench), "beats like a pulse through the whole kingdom." The opinion of almost all was that the reports upon which so many sensible people had founded their opinion "were raised by those who afterwards affected to enquire into them."

That the attitude of the recognized party leaders towards the Bill was purely political was evident from their tactics on the divorce clause. From the King's point of view this was the *raison d'être* of the whole; but the bishops objected to divorce, and in order to secure their votes, since it was clear that the Government majority would be but small, Liverpool proposed to omit the clause. Hereupon Grey, hoping to pledge the bishops against the Bill, advocated and carried its retention.

But it is not necessary to go further into the parliamentary tactics of Ministers or Opposition. A great effect was wrought by the clear testimony of Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Sir William Gell, Dr. Holland, and Keppel Craven on behalf of the Queen. It was felt that

the word of such witnesses outweighed much swearing by paid informants, and though the Crown's cross-examination flustered two of the naval officers, Flynn and Hownham, into contradicting themselves and admitting what they did not mean, this did not prejudice the Queen seriously. In Paris, wrote Canning, it was considered that Gell's witness had completely discredited the Government case, and he reiterated arguments to persuade Liverpool to give up the case: "Is it desirable that the Bill should pass the Lords to be thrown out in the Commons?" he asked, and whether it passed or failed, "does anyone see the consequences? I protest I do not."

The majority of their lordships did not, however, take things so seriously as Ministers. Even the Duke of Wellington appeared to regard the trial as a sort of sporting contest with the Opposition. The dramatic gestures of the Italian interpreter again and again sent the House into roars of laughter. Squibs, jokes, and bets were made on every opportunity. When Denman, after an impassioned appeal, made a maladroit scriptural quotation the Peers were hugely pleased.[1]

As usual, Caroline's own impulsive behaviour gave a bad impression whenever possible. Lord Albemarle and his son have described the extraordinary scene when a certain Teodoro Maiiochi (the "non mi ricordo" of the squibs) was produced as a witness. He had been a trusted servant, and was the man who had chased two armed intruders from her house at Genoa. She was aware that he was to testify but on seeing him she threw back her

[1] He adjured them to rise to the nobility of bidding a lonely woman "Go, and sin no more"! Whig sentiments were at once thus represented:

> "Most Gracious Queen, we thee implore
> To go away and sin no more.
> Or, if that effort be too great,
> To go away at any rate."

veil, placed her arms in her side, and stood staring furiously upon him some seconds, in the midst of a dead silence, then screamed out "Teodoro!" in a most frantic manner, and rushed out of the House ("bounced out of the House in a most unqueenlike manner," says Albemarle). Some thought she cried "Traditore," but George Keppel, who was close to her, says he thought it was a long-drawn "Oh!" of disgust and indignation. "It appeared to be a paroxysm of madness. . . . I think she is insane . . . ,"[1] and others began to suspect the same.

Of course it was assumed that the man was in possession of damaging secrets, and his testimony was indeed horrible enough, but for the reasons given above few felt able to put any faith in them. Another Italian witness, Rastelli, who had laid himself open to doubt, was allowed by the Government to go home quietly to Milan, having "pressing private affairs," and they professed to be horrified that he did not return for the cross-examination. This created as bad an impression against Liverpool's case as the Maiiochi affair had against Caroline.

Old Lord Albemarle could hardly restrain his contempt at the stress laid by the prosecution on the Queen and Bergami having slept on the deck of the polacca, a small boat which carried cattle and cargo below deck, on couches beneath an awning (called by the prosecution "a tent"). Little as he liked the Queen, "no better than the King," as he roundly expressed it, he said he should go to wait upon her if the Bill passed, for he had become convinced of her innocence by merely hearing the evidence against her.

The case for the prosecution lasted from 17th August to 7th September, then intervened an adjournment; the case for the defence occupied from 3rd to 30th October,

[1] Lord Albemarle (the father).

and was avowedly fixed for that time in the hope that a good many peers would go away for the sporting season; the second reading of the Bill was taken on 6th November, and passed by a majority of twenty-eight; at the third reading, on 10th November, after a powerful and eloquent speech from Erskine, the Government majority was but nine. Liverpool at once rose and announced that the Ministers would not proceed with the Bill any further. As Erskine began to speak on this announcement, hailing it as a practical avowal of the Queen's innocence, he broke down, and was carried away from the House a dying man.

Caroline, who was present when Liverpool made this official withdrawal, was hurried away by Brougham, and seemed thunderstruck. "She had a *dazed* look more tragical than consternation . . . evidently all shuddering." Perhaps she understood the astuteness of the Ministry. By their action they had prevented an acquittal in the Commons, while the passing of the Bill by the Lords affirmed her guilt, and could be quoted as doing so when necessary.[1]

But by the people at large the abandonment of the Bill of Pains and Penalties was hailed as a triumph. The national rejoicing was extraordinary. Nothing like it had been seen since Waterloo, or would be again until the passing of the Reform Bill.

London was illuminated for three nights, and so were Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and every town of importance.

The kingdom seemed almost delirious with joy, and the Queen was overwhelmed with congratulations and loyal addresses.

But when the popular demonstrations had subsided the after results of the "Trial" of the Queen could not but be wholly in the Government's favour. Caroline

[1] Yarmouth to Raikes. See Note v at end.

could do nothing. She should have nothing but her legal rights, declared Liverpool, and those did not include being named in the Liturgy, or being crowned, or residing in one of the royal palaces. These matters were all at the choice of the King.

She only lowered herself by unavailing letters and protests. The public excitement ebbed away, and the fact that she had already understood the partisan tactics of the Opposition and Brougham's postponement of her real interests to theirs, deprived her of confidence in his advice, which she no longer sought.

She not very wisely desired to offer up a public thanksgiving at St. Paul's for her deliverance from threatened danger, and on 29th November, despite the unwillingness of the clerical authorities, the Queen, the City, and the mob made a great demonstration, when, leaning on the arm of the Lord Mayor, Caroline made her entry into the Cathedral and was present at the usual morning service. But no allusion to any special cause for thanksgiving was permitted.

Once more the Queen appeared in a public demonstration, in her ill-judged, pitiful attempt to force her way into the Abbey and disturb the Coronation of the King.

That gorgeous ceremony took place in July (1821), and Caroline, after vainly petitioning and protesting to every possible official, remained fixed in her resolve to be present.

Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton, Lord Hood and Keppel Craven, had the staunchness to accompany her. The approach of the two carriages was greeted with cheers, but without any overwhelming outburst. She met neither with obstruction nor yet with any invitation to proceed. She stopped her carriage and hesitated what to do. The spectators in the galleries around watched with the most painful curiosity while the band

of people immediately round the carriage urged her to advance.

She alighted, and on Lord Hood's arm, followed by the two faithful ladies, made towards the great door of Westminster Hall, through which had entered the King's procession just before. It was hurriedly closed. Doorkeepers barred the way, and respectfully asked for the tickets of the little party. "This is your Queen, she is entitled to admission without such a form," said Lord Hood. "Yes," cried Caroline, in agitation, "I am your Queen; will you not admit me?" But the men were firm. At last Lord Hood persuaded her to re-enter the carriage, and the little party drove slowly away. A few hisses were heard, and some ribald laughter, but for the most part sheer pity inspired the cheers and cries of the multitude as she went back to Brandenburg House.

The repulse brought home to her her helplessness, and broke her spirit finally. From that day she was a dying woman. Her friends tried to interest her by planning a tour in Scotland, and carried her once to a review and once to a theatre; but she had no longer the heart to contend with her fate and after five days' painful illness, borne with courage and dignity, she expired on 7th August 1821. She was faithfully attended to the last by Stephen Lushington, whose services during her trial had won her confidence, by the Hoods and Lady Anne Hamilton and the family of Alderman Wood, to whose little granddaughter she had taken one of her passionate likings. Once Prince Leopold came, in private and alone, to tell her of Charlotte, whose loss the poor mother had mourned so deeply on her return that her ladies said it seemed as if she then for the first time realized it. She said that she forgave her enemies. What embittered her thoughts most was the conviction that she had been used as a tool of party. "Nobody care for *me* in this business," she said. "This business has been more cared for as a

political business than as the cause of a poor forlorn woman."

When she knew herself dying, Caroline directed that her body should be buried at Brunswick, and that on the coffin should be set the words—"Here lies Caroline the injured Queen of England." The latter injunction was actually obeyed, though the plate was subsequently removed,[1] and the King was ready enough to grant the former, ordering that the body should be removed with a haste which was considered on all hands unseemly, and with the proviso that the funeral procession should not go through the City of London.

It was believed that thus a public demonstration would be avoided, and the King, then on his way to festivities in Ireland, intended, as soon as the coffin left Harwich, to behave as if, technically, the funeral were over, and begin his round of amusements. But the Londoners realized the intention and insisted that the funeral of the Queen should pass through the City, and in spite of the efforts of the troops, which actually at one point fired on the mob, they accomplished their will by assembling in such dense masses across the ways of access to the officially contemplated route and tearing up the roadway that the hearse was literally forced along the main roads and under Temple Bar.

Lord and Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton, William Austin, Dr. and Mrs. Lushington, and the Chevalier Vassali followed loyally the dead Queen's bier. The captain of the frigate which conveyed her coffin to Stade was the very midshipman who had helped to hand her to the deck of the flagship which had brought her first to England.

At Brunswick, on the 24th of August, amid the respectful mourning of the inhabitants, her mortal remains were

[1] It is said to be still in the possession of Dr. Lushington's descendants.

escorted by the famous Black Brunswickers to the ducal tomb and laid to rest during the night, according to the custom of the ducal house, beside the coffins of her father and brother.

That Caroline was foolish and culpably thoughtless no one ever denied. That she was guilty of misconduct will hardly be maintained to be probable if the faith in her of those who really knew her be remembered. The severest criticisms left on record by any who were her close companions may be found in Gell's letters to Lady Charlotte Campbell and in Lady Charlotte's own narration. They blamed her folly, rudeness, and impropriety, they lost patience with her, but they did not charge her with crime. The confident belief of the lawyers who were intimately acquainted with all the evidence—Perceval, Erskine, Denman, Lushington, Brougham, may be held to outweigh decisively whatever importance may be attached to the opinions of Eldon and Ellenborough.

Brougham told both Plumer and Creevey that he had not at first thought it possible that she *could* be innocent, but that the more the case opened the more her innocence appeared, and by October 1820 he "in his conscience believed her guiltless."

By far the most likely explanation of the unhappy Caroline's career and misfortunes is that suggested by the same penetrating observer. Two years after the Queen's death Thomas Moore heard Brougham tell a knot of friends that it was his belief that she was "not quite right in her head, and that the chief point her insanity turned upon was children," and he thought that this had afforded some ground for the accusations (malicious or otherwise) of the Douglases. It had several times been pointed out that "the Princess gave no trouble until she was deprived of her child." With her passionate fondness for little children, the gradual, hopeless separation from her daughter was a prolonged torment to her. If

years of an agitating struggle against overwhelming odds should in the end have half crazed a mind not naturally strong, and wholly untrained, it would hardly be surprising. Two of her brothers were so feeble-minded that they had to be excluded from the succession. Her brother Frederick William was remarkable for melancholia, his elder son became beyond doubt insane; her own wild proceedings abroad were those of a woman demented rather than vicious. Several persons drew this conclusion in their private letters and diaries—and that no hint of such a possibility was allowed to creep into a more public light is amply accounted for if it be remembered that any suspicion of such a thing would have rendered a divorce impossible.

For the rest, her experience of the boasted justice of England's vaunted constitutional government is humiliating to English readers.

ADELAIDE OF SAXE-MEININGEN

QUEEN OF WILLIAM IV

BORN 13TH AUGUST, 1792; MARRIED 18TH JULY, 1818;
DIED 2ND DECEMBER, 1849

Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen
Wife of William IV
from a painting by Sir W. Beechey in the National Portrait Gallery

ADELAIDE OF SAXE-MEININGEN

CHAPTER I

MARRIAGE. DUCHESS OF CLARENCE

"MEININGEN lies in a narrow valley surrounded by wooded hills. The spacious, finely-built castle with the considerable town spread out below it makes a striking impression. The town is regularly built; the streets are wide; the façades of the houses present a solid, even massive appearance, but all behind the frontage is built of clay. The castle, forming a rather long quadrangle, is strongly built, and one of the largest princely castles in Germany. It is the best guarded too. The sentinels at the outer gate let nobody through who does not belong to the castle. I wanted to see Marshal T. The sub-officer first sent a messenger to ask whether he would speak with me. This punctilio was all very reasonable towards me—a stranger, for they could not know to what particular class of vagrant I belonged, but that the inhabitants of the town and the neighbourhood are subject to this Asiatic etiquette is hard."[1]

In 1789, when this description was penned, the flourishing little town possessed two churches, the castle-church and the market-church. The former was the more frequented, and to it the common people would flock of a morning, tools and all, to hear service and sermon before going to work, not, however, venturing into the actual chapel, but standing in an adjacent ante-room, where

[1] Hess, quoted by Vehse, "Gesch. der Höfe des Hauses Sachsen."

they could hear without presenting a plebeian spectacle to the view of the court assembled in chapel.

Here, in 1792, was born Amelia Adelaide Louisa Theresa Caroline, eldest child of George, reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg Meiningen. This Duke is described as "a very unusual kind of Prince." In spite of his guards and his etiquette, and his punctual attendance on the aristocratically ordered church services—Lutheran, of course—he was a *rara avis* in the Germany of those days, a Liberal Prince. When his noble-minded mother died he had touched poetical hearts by burying her in the churchyard, "because she was worthy to lie among her subjects." On the birth of his son and heir, eight years younger than Adelaide, he exhibited his Liberal principles by inviting the People to be godparents, and naming the child Bernard Eric *Freund*. In more practical matters the Duke really carried out his enlightened ideas; the press was actually free, and the revolutionary novelist Cramer, together with other notorieties banished from their own homes, was allowed to live and publish in Meiningen undisturbed. The character of a haven of refuge began to attach to the little state, about as big as Hertfordshire, and the worthy Duke, though in truth hardly a connoisseur, endeavoured to become a patron of art and letters. His sentiment and his good intentions were self-evident, and if Schiller laughed at the proffered honours and vowed the Duke a terrible bore, Jean Paul Richter declared him to be kindly and intelligent, and was quite appreciative of his mode of placing himself on a level with a mere man of letters, and sitting down to table like a plain gentleman.

This Liberal sovereign died in 1803, when Adelaide was but eleven, and it would not seem that he had managed to impress much of his principles upon his children, whose characters were formed rather by their mother, the sensible and courageous Louisa Eleonora of

Hohenlohe-Langenburg. As regent for her young son the Duchess had a long and anxious task, and she remained firmly at her post throughout the war which surged to and fro in Germany for a generation, and threatened the tiny State with almost every form of danger in turn at the hands of French or Russians, republicans or imperialists.

Born when the triumphant Revolution was betraying the hopes of philosophers, Adelaide grew up under the eternal shadow of the War. She had seen the Russians occupy Meiningen, and had long been accustomed to occupy herself with works of alleviating charity when Waterloo at last bestowed on Germany the strange blessing of peace. She was then twenty-three, and if she thought over such questions she probably felt that enlightened paternal Liberalism had had its day, and that a steadfast reign of order was the first of political blessings.

The Duchess of Meiningen had perforce brought up her two daughters, Adelaide and Ida, in a rigid economy. Their home was one of strict good morals and piety. They had acquired all the accomplishments and good habits proper to their station, and found their principal interest in looking after the schools with which, thanks to the zeal of its rulers, Meiningen was remarkably well provided. The younger sister, Ida, was married to Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, a brother of the reigning Duke, but no offer of marriage appears to have been advanced for the hand of the elder Princess until a year after Ida's marriage, when, in 1817, the catastrophe of the death of Princess Charlotte in England brought an unexpected proposal from that court. Adelaide was then twenty-five, serious in mind and reserved in manner. She was rather small and rather plain, with light flaxen hair and eyebrows, but possessed so amiable and kind a disposition that it was very easy to like her. She was without ambition, and infinitely preferred a retired,

private life to magnificence; in short, she would, in old Queen Charlotte's eyes, make an ideal daughter-in-law.

Whether it was quite fair to link a princess young and gentle, and, as might be guessed, of a deeply religious temper, with the elderly, hard-living, bankrupt Duke of Clarence, was not a point likely to occur to his mother. But he cannot have seemed attractive as a husband. The record of his early life had been, even in that dissolute generation, a byword, and even if this were to be ignored, he had twice formed what appeared to be permanent connections. As a youth (in 1791) he had perpetrated one of the religiously-sanctioned, but insufficiently legal "marriages" so common among German princes, with the beautiful daughter of his German tutor, a connection which Queen Charlotte actually forbade Baron Linsingen, the girl's father, to interfere with, as it would "keep William out of mischief."[1]

After a year or so the romantic couple separated, and the Duke of Clarence gratified his longing for domestic comfort by setting up a *ménage* with the beautiful and popular actress, Mrs. Jordan. It was the only kind of home permitted to the younger sons of George III. The Duke of Kent in like manner, but less ostentatiously, settled down with a French actress abroad. Clarence lived in England, chiefly at Bushey Park, and led an inconspicuous private life, always in debt, for his income was very small, and Mrs. Jordan's professional earnings were by no means to be despised. The Duke's brothers were as willing to recognize his pseudo-wife as they were to accept the position of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and the royal family and society in general treated the ten children with much kindness.

[1] *Cf.* "Caroline von Linsingen and King William IV." The ecstatically Wertherian young lady appears to have found consolation in the excess of her feelings. She was clearly at least as active in the matter as the Prince.

But the establishment of the Regency altered the Duke of Clarence's point of view. He was finding his narrow income and hopeless indebtedness more and more irksome, and conceived the idea of a legal marriage which might procure to him an increase of means, if not quite in the fashion adopted by his two elder brothers. Parliament would certainly refuse a larger provision to him while the Duke of York lived and Princess Charlotte was heir to the throne; but he considered that it would be reasonable to suppose that a marriage with a Prince of the Blood might attract an heiress. He assumed, with too great security, that the Regent, now arbiter of the royal family and the Marriage Act, would agree to such a match, and he therefore broke off his long connection with Mrs. Jordan, gave her a pension and allowed her to go abroad, and presented himself in the guise of a suitor first to one, and then to another wealthy heiress. He got nothing but ridicule, for Miss Tilney Long, in terror at the prospect offered to her, flung herself into the arms of another suitor, while the Duke's second choice firmly declined the proffered honour, and for a few years more Clarence remained a bachelor, for an attempt to find a Danish princess failed also. But in 1818 the death of Princess Charlotte made Clarence, and after him Kent, eventual heir of the throne, and each avowed himself ready to sacrifice private comfort to duty if the nation would sufficiently reward such self-devotion. Kent, after a grave statement of his absurd expectations of what Parliament must do for his discarded mistress (made to the gossip Creevey, who instantly repeated it), brought himself to a decorous acceptance of £6,000 a year, and married the widowed sister of Prince Leopold, a Prince much better liked by the public than by the royal family. Clarence, however, stood out for more lavish treatment, and the obsequious language of the Ministry irritated the Houses. Castlereagh was asking for £10,000 a year

for Clarence, and £6,000 apiece for the younger Princes. "The question," cried Lord King indignantly, "was not what it might please the Duke of Clarence to take, but what it might please the people to give him," and an unusual scene was witnessed in the Commons. The Duke of Cumberland was refused any increase of income at all, a dower, instead, being voted to the Duchess, and only £6,000 was voted to Clarence.

The Duke's income up to this time was but £18,000, besides a few not very lucrative appointments, though he had, like all the princes, received a great sum from the King out of the Admiralty profits. Unfortunately his early dissipation, his connection with Mrs. Jordan (whose professional earnings he was supposed to spend), and his private and self-indulgent life had given him no claim upon the nation, and he was ridiculed by society and rather unpopular with the masses.

Negotiations had already been begun with the Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen when the House of Commons refused to vote the larger grant. Castlereagh had tried to win over the House by saying that this would mean that the Duke of Clarence would conclude no marriage, but members' feelings were not to be softened. Clarence, in fact, duly informed the Minister that upon so parsimonious a grant he could not support a proper establishment, and broke off the overtures already begun. He was reputed to be in debt for something like £60,000.

The spectacle, however, of his younger brothers, Kent and Cambridge, as the sole hopes of the royal family and the nation induced him to reopen communications with Meiningen, and the arrangements for his marriage with Princess Adelaide were then quickly concluded.

It seems to have been the Regent and the old Queen who took all the steps. Clarence wrote to that good friend of the royal family, Lady Harcourt, that he could not find words to describe the goodness of his eldest brother

upon the occasion, while "the Queen has done a thing never even thought of in Germany before, that is, of writing at once to the Princess Adelaide, before she had informed Her Majesty of her intended marriage with me." He was properly sensible of his own good fortune, and wrote: "My daughters once *happily* and *respectably* settled I do look forward with every fair prospect of happiness, considering the high character the Princess Adelaide bears and the insight that her letters give me into her mind and resolution not to be dazzled by the offer but seriously to reflect on the step which she means to take."[1]

Perhaps marriage with a man more than twice her age, a fond father of ten illegitimate children, might not appear in the Princess's eyes quite so brilliant a prospect as the bridegroom assumed. It gave undoubtedly a prospect of wearing the English crown, for the Duke of York was not a healthy man; but, on the other hand, the Regent's constitution was extraordinarily strong and he might not impossibly outlast the Duke of Clarence.

Clarence's conduct had been but scantily courteous, and he now professed himself unable to fetch his bride from Germany. But the Duchess of Meiningen was too practical to take useless umbrage, and herself conducted her daughter to England. They reached London as private travellers on 11th July 1818 and, ungreeted, proceeded to Grillon's Hotel. It must have seemed a discouraging beginning, for no special arrangements had been made for them and the Duke of Clarence was actually out of town. Messages, however, were duly despatched, and after dinner the Regent appeared to pay his call, while rather later a coach-and-four dashed up bringing Clarence in the greatest hurry. A long and friendly interview followed, and it was agreed that the marriage

[1] "Harcourt Papers," vol. vi.

ceremony should take place on the 13th in the presence of the aged Queen at Kew, and at the same time as the celebration of an English marriage service for the Duke and Duchess of Kent, who had already been married according to the Lutheran rite in Germany.

The double wedding was absolutely private in character. A drawing-room was, in accordance with Queen Charlotte's usual custom, fitted up with an altar, the Archbishop and the Bishop of London conducted the service, and immediately afterwards the newly married couples knelt before the old Queen and received her blessing. She was too feeble to bear more and retired, but the rest of the royal family dined together, after which the Duke and Duchess of Kent went away to Claremont, and the rest drove to drink tea in the cottage in the gardens, where Adelaide found herself one of a very cheerful party. It was nightfall before Clarence drove his bride and her mother to the cramped apartments in the stable-court of St. James's which formed his only town house.

But Adelaide was not as yet called upon to make acquaintance with her husband's country or to part from her own family. After a few days in London the newly married couple set out for Hanover, where the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, married only a month earlier, had taken up their abode, the Duke having been named Viceroy in 1816. Here a pleasant and friendly home was awaiting them, and the two Duchesses naturally became friendly. It was doubtless much easier for the Duke of Clarence to break off something of his old careless ways in the German town than at home. Here, in March 1819, the Duchesses of Cambridge and Clarence became mothers, on two successive days, but Adelaide's child, a daughter, lived only for a few hours. For the sake of her health the Duchess was taken as soon as possible to her mother's villa by the health-giving springs of Lieben-

stein, close to Meiningen, where she soon grew stronger. The pleasures and beauty of the place unfortunately tempted the Duke and Duchess to linger there until October, although they had arranged to return to London for the winter. Autumn storms spoiled the roads, travelling was arduous, and the Duchess, in no fit condition to support the fatigue of the journey, fell ill at Dunkirk. Knowing, however, that her husband, in hopes of the birth of another child, was anxious to reach England, she soon declared herself able to make the crossing. The stormy weather was unpropitious, and the Duchess, not a good sailor, lay very ill at Walmer Castle for six weeks.

The rest of the winter was spent in London, where the Duke vainly endeavoured to get the Regent or his agents to spare attention for urgently needed repairs to their inconvenient apartments, which he declared to be not fit for the Duchess and actually dirty, for they had not been repaired for fifty years. Not until the spring was Adelaide brought to her husband's house in the beautiful park at Bushey, which had now been set in order for its new mistress, and at once became to her, as it already was to her husband, a genuine and favourite home.

Here the Duke and Duchess spent the greater part of the next ten years, save for some long visits to Germany, and here the extraordinary influence—it can hardly be otherwise termed—which Adelaide came to exercise over her husband became evident. It was not in vain that the Princess of Meiningen had so seriously weighed the proposal from England. She had gauged the claims to be made upon her, and accepted them as duties to the fulfilment of which she devoted herself with a religious conviction. The position of helpmeet to her elderly husband she filled to perfection. She made him at once happy by countenancing, even welcoming, his children, who found her the kindest of stepmothers. She approved

all his provisions for them, presided over the wedding of the eldest daughter, and cared for the education of the youngest two with an affectionate solicitude. It is said that the quasi-adoption of the FitzClarences by no means pleased the prim old Queen, who sent Lord Chancellor Eldon to remonstrate with her, but the Duchess of Clarence proved unexpectedly resolute. She regarded it as her duty to do her best for her husband's children. "She is the best and most charming woman in the world," declared the eldest son. And so long as William was but Duke of Clarence no susceptibilities need be shocked.

Adelaide based the household at Bushey upon an admirable system of economy. She was a good manager, and gave a personal supervision to the estate and household arrangements, whereby she not only provided real comfort for her husband, but induced him to observe a most edifying regularity and economy. To do him justice, William had strong leanings towards honesty, and had more than once made spasmodic efforts to retrench and pay off debts, but hitherto without effectual results. To his wife, too, was due a more difficult reformation in manners and habits. The physician Beattie, who accompanied them on one of their German tours, can hardly eulogize sufficiently the simple regularity of his Royal Highness's life and his moderation in food and drink. The result was an improvement in health which quite impressed both Duke and doctor.

The Duke of Clarence had perspicacity and honesty enough to recognize his wife's sterling merit. She presented a type quite new to him with her blending of lofty morals, and considerate, cheerful affection. His home had become refined and orderly, and yet it was more happy than ever before. And he repaid her by showing himself an exemplary husband, and in speech and action revealing a kind of bluff chivalry which astonished those who had known him earlier.

"You would be surprised at the Duke of Clarence if you were to see him," wrote Colonel Wilbraham to Colchester two years after the marriage, "for his wife, it is said, has entirely reformed him, and instead of that *pólisson* manner for which he used to be celebrated, he is now quiet and well-behaved like anybody else."

Despite the difference of age the Duke and Duchess had some tastes alike, especially their fondness for a simple, quiet life, and for fresh air and rural pleasures. In the garden, hothouses and kitchen-gardens provided their hobby rather than the pleasure grounds. Both were fond of active exercise, but whereas the Duke was a great walker the Duchess was fond of riding, and was an excellent horsewoman. Both were remarkably punctual, ready to dispense with etiquette, friendly and hospitable to the few country neighbours whom they liked for their own sake. The Duchess was an admirable hostess, made her husband's friends feel welcome, remembered what persons would like to meet each other and sit next to each other, and took care that people should not be kept a long while in tiring attendance. With Princess Augusta and the other sisters-in-law she was soon on the best of terms, and by her own friendship for the Duchess of Cumberland contrived to gloss over an ever-threatening family quarrel with the overbearing, brutal Duke of Cumberland. After Queen Charlotte's death she helped to persuade the rigid Augusta that it was time to bury the old resentment and call upon the Duchess. "A saving angel for the family," one observer terms her.

Her own chief pleasures were unselfish ones. She took an interest—less common then among owners of estates than it has since come to be—in the welfare of the labourers and cottagers. Her principal friendships, so far as recorded, seem to have been for Countess Münster and Baroness von Bülow, wives respectively of the Hanoverian minister and the Prussian envoy, and she liked

to have her friends' children brought too, and would devise suitable amusements for them and watch the playbills for performances for which she could fittingly give up her box to the young people.

"It gives me great pleasure," she wrote to Baroness von Bülow on one such occasion

to know that I can occasionally provide some agreeable hours in the theatre for you and your husband and children. I assure you I would rather know you were enjoying those amusements than go to them myself, so I trust you will allow me to continue sending you my theatre pass from time to time, and I hope you understand the silent greeting which never fails to accompany it.

I should very much like to go to the children's ball with you. Had I been in town I should certainly have asked for an invitation. I enjoy seeing happy children; their innocent pleasures are so pure and natural; it is refreshing to watch them, and it would be well to follow their example, one too much neglected in the great world. Even the Bible bids us be like little children. 'Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he shall not enter therein." How deep is the significance of those words and how little they are considered! How rarely you meet a simple man or woman in our great world: they would be hard to find even with Diogenes's lantern.

Her taste for drawing several correspondents mention, she could even take quite good likenesses. Her monumental works of needlework, tradition saith, were second only to Queen Charlotte's. She was never without some large and elaborate piece of embroidery or the like, and worked an entire dress for her little niece, Princess Victoria, "in coloured wools." "The Queen does nothing but knot after dinner," her husband would say in later years, by way of encouraging old naval friends who were shy of venturing to court. She even carried her woolwork to Epsom, to solace her during the monotony

of the races, which apparently bored her as much as they had done Queen Charlotte.

Though she liked a private life best, Adelaide was perfectly ready to hold her own in more fashionable scenes. Lady Granville describes her on one of those uncomfortable visits to George IV's Brighton Pavilion, which were so much dreaded by the unlucky recipients of invitations: "A small well-bred, excellent little woman," who moved very gracefully and entered or left a room *à ravir*, and "with nine new gowns, the most loyal of us not having been able to muster above six."

She was able to see the humorous side of the little *contretemps* which occasionally befell the ducal household, not well practised in ceremonial. On one of their rare formal dinner parties she could hear the absent-minded Lord Dudley muttering: "What bores these royalties are, now ought I to take wine with her as I should with an ordinary woman?" He decided to venture on it, and the Duchess was very polite. Later, he forgot, and repeated the ceremony: the Duchess bowed as kindly as before, but observed, "You know I have already taken wine with you." "Oh the brute! So she has, too!" was his lordship's unexpected answer.

In December 1820 the longed-for child was born, a daughter christened Elizabeth Georgina Adelaide, but the frail infant only lived three months. The mother never ceased to mourn her lost hope. A beautiful little effigy of the sleeping babe was carved by Chantrey, and this she kept always in her own room, "a nurse to grief."

The most pleasant episodes of Adelaide's life during this period must have been the long visits to Germany. In 1822, chiefly for the sake of his wife's health, which had again been strained by severe indisposition, the Duke took her to visit her sister Ida at Antwerp and Ghent, Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar being then a general in

the army of the Netherlands. At Coblenz and Frankfort she was the honoured guest of her sister-in-law, Elizabeth, the popular Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg. Next, at Fulda, her young brother, Bernard, reigning Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, came to greet her and welcomed her to a long visit at Meiningen while William made a more extended tour. Finally, an enjoyable visit was paid to the Queen of Würtemberg, William's eldest sister, who took the Duke and Duchess for a trip up the Neckar in barges and found that her sister-in-law shared her own taste for sketching.

In somewhat similar fashion they spent the spring and summer of 1825, when Adelaide brought her two younger step-daughters to Meiningen. And in the year following a prolonged tour on the Rhine and in the Netherlands occupied some six months and concluded with a visit to Waterloo. The Duke of Clarence had a great veneration for the Duke of Wellington and always celebrated Waterloo Day with a semi-religious devotion.

Sea-travelling was now made easier by steam, not that royalty had yet come to trust itself entirely to this new-fangled, noisy, and dirty means of navigation. The royal yacht used to be taken in tow by a steamer so as to combine speed and comfort. On one occasion (in 1825) the party were in some danger from the rough weather—Adelaide seems to have been usually unlucky in her crossings—for the cables gave way and the yacht was swept away from the convoy. The danger, however, was brief, and the sailors brought the boat safely into Yarmouth.

Slight as was the attention paid to the Duke of Clarence by the populace or by society, which had long since judged him to be a vulgar, trivial personage, he could not but acquire a certain importance in the eyes of statesmen from the increasing probability of his eventual succession to the throne. In 1823 the lucrative post of

General of the Marines was bestowed upon him, but this involved little besides ornamental functions. When the death of the Duke of York occurred, in 1827, Canning devised a not unskilful method of providing the heir to the Crown with a great position and a sort of introduction to publicity and responsibility. William had always cherished the reputation of a sailor, though his progress through the naval grades above that of lieutenant had, perforce, been achieved on dry land, and Canning now revived for him the office of Lord High Admiral, in abeyance since the reign of Anne, whose consort had enjoyed that title. The post had, therefore, no necessary duties or traditions, and as an Admiralty Board, under Sir George Cockburn, was appointed to transact the real work, the Duke's want of knowledge and prestige need do no harm.

Nothing loth, the Duke of Clarence installed himself and his family at the Admiralty, and Adelaide, with some regrets, was obliged to relinquish her gardens and country charities to preside over great receptions and very mixed company, for the new Lord High Admiral manifested the hearty democratic manners of the seaman and issued his invitations to a host of naval officers, doubtless gallant and honest in high degree, but not always of the stamp which usually frequents royal drawing-rooms. Whole families (says the Prussian envoy's wife) might be seen parading the crowded rooms arm-in-arm amid a press so great that she could hardly cling to her husband's arm, and the men in despair put on their hats. "After vainly searching for the Duchess in several rooms we gave up trying to present ourselves to our hostess. We found the Duke in a little room where they were washing up the china." Waterloo Day he celebrated in a style quite after his own heart: a number of ships were skilfully connected together to form a sort of immense floating hotel, where the Duke and Duchess entertained successfully a throng of dis-

tinguished persons, the different ships permitting of a proper grading of company.

When once compelled to take a place in fashionable society, the Duchess's pleasant manners, informed by tact and a tireless and considerate kindness, procured for her some degree of popularity. She spoke English with a pronounced accent, which some thought pretty, and, at all events, with perfect decorum. It was unfortunate that she had a harsh voice with a nasal ring, and she was unable to conceal her preference for German ways and for talking German when possible. She had been transplanted to England too late to be able to appear English, and, after all, many of the royal family were at least as much German as English.

Unluckily for himself, the Lord High Admiral could not content himself with ornamental functions. His restless and inquisitive activity led him to disregard the terms of his appointment and to interfere with the organization. Moreover, he persisted in regarding the Admiralty from a naval point of view, whereas for a long period it had been a department for exercising political influence, chiefly Scottish. Hence the Duke's influence upon appointments was more popular in naval than governmental circles. The Treasury offended him by refusing a not very large sum which he requested in order to pension off old officers so as to promote younger men, while he brought matters to an *impasse* by quarrelling with Sir George Cockburn, and the remonstrance which the Duke of Wellington was obliged to address to him produced his resignation and retirement with the Duchess into private life until the death of George IV summoned them to the throne.

CHAPTER II

ACCESSION.—THE REFORM BILL

IT is difficult now to gauge the intense unpopularity which, at the time when the crown devolved upon William IV, attached to most members of the royal family. With such grave apprehension was the immediate future regarded that the death of George IV, despised by all who knew him, "incapable of remembering a benefit or forgetting an injury," the king who neglected every duty, was regarded in intelligent circles with something very like dismay. It can only have been the princesses, secluded from real information, who imagined the general concern during his last illness to spring from affection. Elizabeth of Hesse-Homburg informs a correspondent, with more than her usual unction, how her English letters tell her "that every soul values and loves the King and that the general anxiety is very great . . . all must love him who know him . . . dear, blessed King . . . dear Angel . . . adored brother . . . and in heaven will all his noble and generous deeds be registered, and who ever did more?"[1]

With extraordinary patience or apathy the nation had supported the burden of the gigantic extravagance of George IV. The passionate hatred with which he was once regarded had during the last years of his reign waned into a general disregard. He secluded himself in an almost oriental privacy, and, as was supposed, a quite oriental luxury. It was difficult to cherish any keen feel-

[1] "Correspondence of Princess Elizabeth," ed. P. C. Yorke.

ing towards a king who was never seen and seldom heard of. But it was certain that his vast outlay upon the tasteless buildings he hardly cared to visit, and his extravagant gifts to the Conynghams and other favourites would provide embarrassment for his successor. The brother who had exercised most influence, of late years, over the miserable king was the Duke of Cumberland, long regarded with an intensity of hatred which few English princes have ever brought upon themselves, and his advent to the throne was only barred by the lives of the ageing William, and of the child Victoria. A likelihood of his accession, it was believed, might produce a revolution and a republic.

Little was known of the new King, William: he hated the Duke of Wellington—he would fling himself into the hands of the Duke of Wellington; he was a "good easy man" who would "submit to anything for a quiet life, nay for a quiet day"[1]—he was a meddlesome fidget who would upset everything at once: he would be influenced by his wife—he would be a slave to his children; such were some of the predictions. The reality proved much simpler and far more successful than any of the croakers had allowed for.

The prince who had all his life been of no importance showed a naïve, almost childlike pleasure on finding himself master of the splendid palaces and all the fine and costly things on which his eldest brother had for so long squandered the nation's money. With a startling promptitude he took the reins at once, inspected the gorgeous Pavilion at Brighton, Buckingham Palace, still unfinished, and the new buildings at Windsor, which last the new sovereigns speedily selected as their permanent home. He dealt with his inheritance characteristically; the late King's army of cooks and his expensive band were dismissed; some of his costliest

[1] Croker.

acquisitions, such as a service of gold plate, were made Crown property, the drives and terraces of Windsor were once more thrown open to the public, and a considerable part of the notorious "Cottage" by Virginia Water was ordered to be pulled down.

Even the first formalities of introductions the new King transacted as if they meant something, with a kindly word for almost all, and to the ministers (Wellington, Lyndhurst, Peel and their Tory colleagues) he was frank and even genial.

A King who drove or walked about among his people almost like a private individual, who was not afraid to talk frankly, and who played the host to his guests and delighted to summon the old acquaintance of simpler days to share the feasts of his new greatness, speedily became popular. Before the first interest roused by so amiable a change from the odious habits of his predecessor had time to fade, the nation learned that William IV held none of that predecessor's "conscientious" objections to reforms, had summoned a Whig ministry, endorsed a bill for parliamentary innovations, and was, in short, that miracle, a reforming King.

At first, those about the Court, responsible or otherwise, could not but feel some alarm at "the pace" the new sovereign was making, and criticisms and jests in plenty were voiced at the want of dignity and makeshift methods of the new *régime*. "Dear, dear," muttered Lord Dudley audibly, at the Pavilion, "what a change to be sure, cold *pâtés* and hot champagne!" The public crowded into Windsor so rudely that they thrust themselves up to the windows. His Majesty must needs go for a walk alone in the streets of London, and of course was instantly followed by a clamorous mob, and with difficulty got back to St. James's with the aid of two or three gentlemen. Every day he asked troops of people to dinner, more than the room would conveniently hold,

and was apt to dismiss them unceremoniously at an early hour, for he was an early riser and liked to go to bed when sleepy. "Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said on one occasion, "I wish you a good night. I will not detain you any longer from your amusements and shall go to my own, which is to go to bed; so come along, my Queen."

But these inconveniences or absurdities lasted a very short time. In a few weeks it is clear that Queen Adelaide organized the necessary machinery of the royal household as well as she had done that of Bushey, and the gossips observe that the King's dinners are very good, the servants attentive, and hospitality shown suitably. Sentinels were posted at Windsor to keep the public to the walks permitted to them. It proved to be unnecessary to apply to the Duke of Wellington (as had been suggested) to warn the King not to walk up St. James's Street by himself. The Queen, without waiting to be asked, undertook instantly that His Majesty would walk in less public places, or early in the morning, and whenever possible she accompanied him to his obligatory receptions and reviews, and when she was present everything went well.

"She is very ugly, with a horrid complexion, but has good manners," notes Charles Greville on her first appearance, receiving the Ministers' wives, "and did all this (which she hated) very well. She said the part as if she was acting, and wished the green curtain to drop." On the same day she witnessed the King's review of the Guards, and joined with him in receiving addresses from the Universities. First the King sat on the throne and "then abdicated for the Queen to seat herself on and receive them too. She sat it very well, surrounded by the Princesses and her ladies and household."

Adelaide was far from regarding her elevation to sovereignty with William's cheerfulness. She accepted

it with a dutiful patience. If she saw more clearly than the King that a time of dangerous political crisis had arrived, she had not his hopefulness as to the ultimate result, and could hardly feel much confidence in his power to direct the storm.

Whether this simple, blunt, inexperienced monarch would be able to survive the political tempest was indeed to many a matter of deep speculation.

To understand the difficult position of the King and Queen it is necessary to glance at the general situation. Abroad, popular uprisings in several countries threatened to set Europe in a blaze: Greece had declared her independence, but could not yet find a king; the July revolution in Paris drove the French royal family in sudden flight to England a month after the death of George IV; the Belgians seceded from Holland that same summer, and were about to offer their crown to Prince Leopold. At home, commercial and financial strain, and the accumulated distress and discontent of some twenty years, were focussed in a loud and powerful demand for a constitutional reform which should make the House of Commons representative of all the middle and respectable classes of the nation, and free it from aristocratic domination and ministerial corruption.

While Duke of Clarence, William had reckoned himself a Whig; perhaps his naturally simple tastes and his exclusion from or eschewal of aristocratic society gave him an instinctive sympathy with those who would fain restrict the overweening power of those great families who had monopolized rule for near a century and a half. At all events, when the ministry of the Duke of Wellington, left in a minority in the new parliament of November 1830, resigned, it was with apparent pleasure that the new King called in Earl Grey, and assured the Whigs of his approval of a measure of parliamentary reform. William's view of his constitutional duty was to support

the ministers in office so long as they evidently had the nation behind them, and he told Grey, in his hearty style, that he looked on him as "embarked in the same boat with" himself, and Brougham, apologetic for the pile of petitions which he produced from his great bag, that he would "willingly receive anything from that bag except the Seals." But that this should be construed as intimating His Majesty's personal zeal for Grey's Reform Bill, or his particular affection for the Lord Chancellor, was far beyond the intention of the worthy King, who never could understand the importance others attached to his goodnatured expressions.

The Queen's feelings towards any steps which appeared to tend to revolution were very different. The French Revolution proved to her the awful fate awaiting those who flinched from their hereditary duty of governing. With a patriot sovereign, such, perhaps, as her own father had attempted to be, she might sympathize, but to fling political power into the clutches of a *bourgeoisie* was in her eyes a wicked mistake.

As the Reform Bill must, of course, be debated and carried in a House of Commons elected on the old system, and a House of Lords which could hardly be expected to be converted by oratory to voting its own deposition, it was natural, though regrettable, that both sides should endeavour to advertise whatever influence and prestige they might derive from sympathy in high places. For the next two years the pro-reform papers were reiterating that the King was personally interested—"pledged to Reform," "a party to the Bill" were the notable expressions of the "Times," while the opposite side as industriously made play with his Majesty's doubts, difficulties, and constitutional self-abnegation.

Unfortunately Adelaide's uncompromising disapproval of the Whigs and their great measure soon became known. Herein she was in full sympathy with Princess

Augusta and her sisters, Mary, Duchess of Gloucester, and the Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg, who visited England in 1831. The unamiable passion for finding scapegoats led several of the London papers to declare that the Queen and the princesses were using their influence against the Reform Bill, and the Queen in consequence experienced unpopularity in a disagreeable degree. Conscious of her own dutiful correctness in never talking of politics to the King, Adelaide did not think it necessary, and possibly would have thought it dishonest, to attempt to disguise her personal feelings towards the authors of the coming revolution. Her manner to Lord Grey was so distant and reserved that he perceived how unwelcome was the change of Government to her. He was at first much taken aback, but soon satisfied himself "that she has no influence over the King, and that, in fact, he never even mentions politics to her, much less consults her—that her influence over him as to his *manners* has been very great and highly beneficial, but there it stops."[1]

Certainly it was not Grey himself who intentionally spread the imputations of the Queen's meddling. But beside Grey stood the unscrupulous Brougham, now Lord Chancellor, and necessarily cognisant of all that occurred. Brougham entertained no friendly feeling for the King, who had a personal objection to him, and Brougham for some years was an inspirer of the "Times," and author of some of its most vehement anonymous letters. Nor was it known at that time that, immaculate as was Grey's political reputation, he revealed to Princess Lieven even the most confidential details.

Princess Lieven, who had been on friendly terms with George IV and his private côterie, had no love for the new Queen, to whom, while Duchess of Clarence, she had been actually rude. She records that the Queen

[1] Creevey.

was a far cleverer woman than people supposed, and that she had great determination of character, and she probably helped to spread the notion of undue interference. It was so much the tradition among prominent ladies in England to aspire to political importance that perhaps Adelaide might at first plausibly be suspected of using her influence with the King, but a few months' experience should have taught the truth to those familiar with the Court.

The Reform Bill was introduced by Lord John Russell on 1st March 1831, and hotly debated. On the 21st it passed the second reading by one vote. In committee an amendment was carried against the Government (that the number of members for England and Wales ought not to be diminished). Grey, having foreseen his defeat, had early asked the King to promise to dissolve. William IV had hesitated at first, but when the defeat was a fact he agreed, and dissolved the parliament on 21st April. London, ardently pro-reform, was illuminated on the news of this blow to the Tory opposition, and the mob attacked unilluminated houses, broke the windows of the Duke of Wellington at Apsley House, and maltreated the Marquis of Londonderry[1] and other Tory peers. In June the new parliament assembled, and the second Reform Bill was at once introduced. On 2nd July it passed the second reading by a majority of 136. Excitement was then concentrated on the peers, and on the King's conduct towards them. The coronation on 8th September afforded a brief lull in political strife, but on 21st September the Bill passed the third reading, and from 3rd to 8th October was debated by the Lords, who then (8th) rejected it by a majority of forty-one. Parliament was prorogued on the 20th, and Grey and the daily press urged the King to create a large number of new peerages, fifty or sixty, and "swamp" the House.

[1] Charles Stewart, brother of Castlereagh.

But, during the recess of Parliament, the most alarming riots which England had in modern times experienced broke out all over the country, especially at Derby, Nottingham, and Bristol, and these, together with the supineness of the Government in the face of such events, gave the King ground for alarm. It was impossible for him to gauge the correctness of the different prognostications pressed upon him; he believed it unconstitutional to "swamp" the House of Lords, and he thought that the body of waverers or trimmers in the Lords might be so far conciliated by concessions as to pass an amended Bill. When Parliament reassembled in December the third Reform Bill was brought in, and on 23rd March 1832 passed the third reading in the Commons without a division.

All through the winter the King and the Prime Minister were negotiating. William gave a somewhat vague undertaking to create new peers, if calling up heirs would suffice. His hopes of converting the Upper House to reform were encouraged by its approval of the second reading of the Bill, by a majority of nine, on 14th April, and when Lyndhurst (the former Chancellor) carried an amendment to alter the order of the principal clauses of the Bill so as to postpone disfranchisement of rotten boroughs, he could not see why Grey, who in general terms professed a willingness to conciliate, utterly refused to consider the alteration, and held to the policy dubbed in the papers: "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." On 8th May Grey definitely asked William IV for as many peerages as might prove necessary—fifty, sixty, or more. After a night of agitated consideration the King next day refused. Grey resigned, and Wellington and Lyndhurst were sent for. But the Duke could not form a ministry, and on 15th May the King recalled Grey and promised to create as many peers as he desired. This being made

known to the Duke by a semi-official letter from Sir Herbert Taylor, together with the proviso that if sufficient peers abstained from opposing the Bill the creations need not be made, he informed the House of His Majesty's decision, and himself with one hundred peers stayed away, so that the Bill was passed on 4th June, and received the royal assent on 7th June.

No crisis at all similar to that of the Reform Bill had confronted any previous English sovereign, and a cleverer man than William IV might well have been bewildered. He was saved by his firm resolution to act constitutionally, and it is now generally agreed that his conduct was in that respect quite correct. He kept his head despite the sincere terror of very many who imagined that London was about to copy Paris. He believed that revolution was not impossible and might be kindled by a conflict between the two Houses, and it was, therefore, towards avoiding this catastrophe that he had bent all his efforts. This explains his hesitation about dissolving in 1831. He was doubtful whether the Ministers ought not to shelve the Bill for a while and devote themselves to other urgently required reforms, as, for instance, in Ireland, while a compromise might be negotiated between the Houses, but when once convinced that the popular excitement made this impossible he was as prompt to dissolve as Grey himself could require. When his unwilling Master of the Horse alleged that the state coach could not be ready, that the horses could not get their manes plaited, the King vowed he would go with anybody's horses—in a hackney coach if need be—and went so promptly that the Guards were only in time to escort him on the homeward journey.

Unfortunately his hesitation had been made known by Tory members of the Household to the Opposition, who misconstrued it into a sign that he was wavering in support of the Ministers, and Grey was no doubt perfectly

accurate in saying that the sight of members of the Household speaking and voting against the Bill gave an encouragement to its opponents which embarrassed him.

The King's desire was to be impartial. He was annoyed by the constant statements of the papers that he was "in favour of the Bill," and though he was ready to help ministers by leaving to them the disposal of most of the Court offices he drew the line at those whose holders formed practically a part of his own family. That Lord Errol, his son-in-law and the Queen's Master of the Horse, was a supporter of the Bill, and Lord Howe, her Chamberlain, an opponent, he considered ought to be a matter of indifference both to himself and to the Ministers, and he was offended by ministerial hints and much plainer language in the papers suggesting the dismissal of all those officials who would not vote for the Bill. Three members who belonged to the Great Chamberlain's department he willingly dismissed at Grey's request, and "the job" was duly deplored by the Tory party; but he told Grey that those of the Household who were his personal, though not, of course, his menial servants he considered that he could not, either for the general principle or for wisdom's sake, permit the ministry or the House of Commons (through the Civil List vote) to interfere with. His conduct was the exact opposite of that of George III, who had provided a corps of ministerial voters in his Household, and been rewarded by Dunning's famous motion. Now the very party which had thundered against George III was admonishing William IV of his duty to copy his father's action. There was no royal guide to the mutations of the British Constitution, and William IV was to find it as impossible as had William III to practise the Crown's theoretical impartiality.

There was a private reason for the King's refusal to dismiss Lord Howe and certain of his colleagues. Queen

Adelaide had formed a great liking for her Chamberlain, on whose opinion she relied with regard to points of propriety and etiquette, and whom she would have sorely missed, and William, who all his life had been familiar with the Howe family, was exceedingly averse from inflicting an indignity on a personal friend which could not but recoil upon the Queen and inflict upon her some measure of indignity and discomfort.

Before the winter session of 1831-2 the King had begun to feel uneasiness on account of the premeditated nature of the riots and the virulence of orators and of the Press. Stones had been flung at the carriage of the King and Queen as they drove to Drury Lane, and had broken the windows; caricatures exhibited the King in petticoats and the Queen in breeches; while at Ascot a man in the crowd had flung a stone which struck the King, as he was sitting in his box, so violently that he cried out, "Oh God, I am hit!" believing himself shot. The Queen and his daughters were in terror for him, and it is not unnatural that he was not disposed to take very graciously Grey's warning that the conduct of persons whom his Majesty was supposed to favour, and of her Majesty's household, as well as the "declared hostility" of the Princesses produced suspicions in the public mind that the King himself was at heart adverse to the Reform Bill.

In reply, William, without naming the Queen but taking the whole onus upon himself, intimated to the Prime Minister that he felt some resentment at the implied charge that, unless he would banish from Court such of his private intimates as might choose to speak or vote against the Bill, he was to be considered as encouraging Opposition. "His Majesty," he added, could not think "that his continuing to admit to his private circles individuals with whom and their families he has been during great part of his life on habits of friendship and

the most familiar intercourse, though never politically connected with them, . . . and . . . the non-interruption of intercourse which has been of long standing, and which contributes to his domestic comfort, which is quite unconnected with any political feeling, and never leads to the utterance of an opinion on politics, can be productive of those difficulties and embarrassments which Earl Grey describes as so serious."[1]

In the meanwhile the "Times," professedly defending the Queen from attacks made upon her in inferior papers, and notably in the "John Bull," and from the use said to be made of her name by the ultra-Tories, contrived to spread widely the belief that she was exerting undue influence. The "Times" (on 9th April) adverted to the reports being circulated "of improper interference on the part of an illustrious personage on the subject of the Reform Bill. We are as confident as we are of our existence that" the conduct of certain persons in the Royal Household derived no encouragement from her.[2] Two days later the paper admonished "a certain busy Earl" (Howe): "You set yourself about certain excellent female branches of an illustrious family, not daring to approach the men of it. . . . Give up the place whose opportunities you so scandalously abuse, you are on the eve, it is to be hoped, of being removed from it."

[1] The editor of the "Correspondence of Earl Grey and William IV" announces that he has omitted nearly all Grey's communications to his Majesty about Howe. Their tenor can only be gathered from the King's replies. Howe, Waldegrave, and FitzClarence (created Earl of Munster in May 1831), were, of course, much more important to Grey than members of the Lower House, since his danger lay only in the Upper.

[2] But the insolent letter—said to be Brougham's—of 15th March to "a certain distinguished lady" for "denouncing the Reform Bill with all her sex's zeal, and with a vehemence all her own," was certainly not addressed to the Queen (as has been stated) but to Lady Jersey, Queen Caroline's friend, at this time an impassioned supporter of Wellington.

As Grey was understood to have great influence with the "Times," the King spoke to him on the insolent manner with which the Queen's name was being treated, and the Minister promised to remonstrate, but the paper only took to exhorting the King to recollect that he was pledged to the Bill.

The effect of these and of worse diatribes was brought home to Queen Adelaide. Outbursts of insult several times greeted her appearance, and one evening in May, as she was driving home from the "Ancient Music" concert, she found her carriage surrounded and almost stopped by a shouting mob. She had no guards, and her footmen with difficulty beat back the people with their canes from thrusting their heads into the coach. The King had heard the tumult and had been waiting for her in much concern. He hurried downstairs to meet her and found her, naturally, very much frightened by the incident, which she could not but regard as a sign of what she all along had feared, the nascent Revolution. It was not surprising that this and the other riots gave the King so much displeasure that he declined—though on the score of his health which just then was much impaired—to attend a Lord Mayor's banquet, but thereby fresh discontent was stirred which again reflected on the Queen.

Though William IV had told Howe that he was not to resign he felt it only wise to send him, through Sir Herbert Taylor, a private, but definite request so to "regulate his opposition to the Bill as not to compromise the King or Queen," and he also thought it proper to let Grey know that he had gone so far. Great was the royal indignation when next morning (23rd May) the "Times" gave prominence to the statement that "A certain Earl . . . has received a severe rebuke from the King on account of his continued meddling and incessant chatter against the Reform Bill . . . a sign

of his [the King's] own decided adherence to this great measure." Apparently Grey had thought fit to impart the information to Brougham, but the evidence of Grey's "connection with the revolutionary press" agitated the King so painfully that he is said to have shed tears.

When the crisis of the Reform Bill approached in the autumn, the "Times" resumed its veiled attacks upon the Queen. "Malice and effrontery are still at work libelling the Queen of England," it announced (in a leader of 1st August), accusing her of "beating up for the cause of the enemies of the Bill, that is to say, stirring up hostility to the King's ministers (etc.) . . . thwarting that great measure (etc.) . . . blasting those hopes (etc.) . . . planting in the bosom of her royal consort a thorn (etc.) . . . such is the conduct which the Tory faction presumes to charge upon the Queen of England." So the "Times" urged the Prime Minister to dismiss any state servants of her Majesty's household, "beginning with Lord Howe," who should refuse to pledge themselves to vote for the Bill, and reminded him of the animosity of "ladies too, ladies of the Bedchamber, Howes in petticoats!" A few days later the same paper expressed its commiseration for the King, because, as to the all-important Bill, "the female part of his family differ generally from him in opinion. Heaven bless the amiable babblers . . . but it is painful to be incessantly obliged to make the sense of public duty triumph over private affection."

Howe himself, in fact, had realized that it would be better to resign his post, but the Queen was most unwilling to lose him, and said to the King that she knew the Ministers wished to get rid of the Earl, but that she did not want to part with him for the reason they alleged, and that if His Majesty should think it right to dismiss him she would of course submit, but she hoped in that case the King would allow her to do without a

Chamberlain altogether.[1] And this, practically, was the compromise adopted, when at last, in October, the worried old King was obliged to give in and ask Howe to resign. The Queen would not accept the services of the new Chamberlain, the Earl of Denbigh, except upon a few formal occasions when they could not be avoided, and Lord Howe remained in personal attendance upon her without title or salary. What distressed the Queen most, says Miss Clitherow, who at that time was intimate with her, was a fear lest the King should be blamed for breaking his promise to her, "she was sure he would not have done it if he could have helped himself." With regard to the outcry about her influence over the King she contented herself with observing to Mrs. Clitherow, "I must have my own opinion, but I do not talk to the King about it. It would only make him unhappy, and could do no good."

Those admitted to personal intercourse with the royal family at this time could see that in truth Adelaide's main preoccupation was to soothe her husband's anxiety and endeavour to divert his mind from politics. He seemed in one year to have aged ten, so heavily did the responsibility weigh upon him.

That Grey ventured again upon a sort of innuendo as to the Queen did not tend to smooth matters. An address from the Bishops had been presented to her in the spring of 1832, and her reply, though she and the Archbishop thought it carefully wide of politics, was found fault with; and this "and other circumstances," wrote Grey, had produced an effect with respect to her Majesty which Earl Grey regretted. "Nothing," replied the King instantly, "could have been more cautious and guarded than the Queen's conduct for months past," adding that he thought the Minister must know the tricks of the papers too well to be affected by their allegations.

[1] Croker.

The only member of the Royal family who is recorded to have tried to convert him was his cousin the Duke of Gloucester, who (like Cumberland) turned his glass down when the King gave the Duke of Wellington's health. He now thought it his duty to come and warn His Majesty that the Bill would certainly be the means of depriving him of his crown. "Very well, very well," quoth the King, testily. "But, sir, your Majesty's head may be in it," urged the poor Duke.[1]

"The Queen," said Princess Augusta, "is like my good mother—never interferes or even gives any opinion. We *may* think, we *must* think, we *do* think, but we need not speak." She was not, however, left without public justification. The Earl of Winchilsea took notice in the House of Lords of the aspersions on the Queen, "whose private character had gained, as it justly entitled her to, the esteem and attachment of this great nation. (Loud cheers from both sides of the House.) Would to God he knew who this vile slanderer was . . . the cowardly detractor should never live to utter another vile slander!"[2]

When, in 1832, the King began to hesitate over the creation of the new peers, the Queen could not but feel relieved. William had already agreed to call up about forty heirs and childless collaterals, and was not at all pleased when Grey brought back the list with about half of these struck out and a request for an indefinite number of fresh creations. When he observed how many of the reforming Lords refused, on the score of expense or some like reason, to have their sons called up to the House of Lords during their own lifetime, and that Grey himself was prominent among them, he could not but wonder

[1] Croker.

[2] Quoted from the "Morning Herald," 5th October 1831, in a pamphlet, "Appeal on behalf of the Queen of England" (1832), protesting against the unjust abuse hurled at her.

whether the emergency was, after all, so great as to entitle the Minister to overrule his constitutional conscience, and (as already stated) he at length refused. Their Majesties' friends next day found "the King cheerful but silent . . . the Queen certainly in particular good spirits, the King's firmness respecting the making no peers had delighted her."[1] Great in proportion must have been her distress when, after all, Grey remained in office and the terrible Bill was carried. To her it was the beginning of the end, for, as said Lady Frederick FitzClarence, a gentle little woman who knew and liked Queen Adelaide, and declared her to be both sensible and good-natured, the Queen after living fourteen years in England had not acquired a single English notion. "The Queen's fixed impression is that an English revolution is rapidly approaching, and that her own fate is to be that of Marie Antoinette, and she trusts she shall be able to act her part with more courage." Yet she was no friend to the Duke of Wellington, though she considered him the only man who could stem the revolutionary current, for she cherished an old grudge against him "for having turn'd them out of the Admiralty, for his uncourteous manner of doing it and for the disrespectful way in which he always treated the King when he was Duke of Clarence."[2]

Amid the fierceness of London controversy one thinks that the Queen must have felt a touch of amused pleasure at the birthday compliment forwarded to her from one of the centres of the Reform agitation. A worthy confectioner of Manchester (one Bowker, of Bridge Street) constructed for the occasion an enormous plum-cake, ornamented with the Queen's armorial bearings and the national emblems, and the trophy was duly presented to her Majesty by the county member, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Benjamin Heywood.

[1] Clitherow. [2] Creevey.

Even the passing of the Reform Bill did not deliver Queen Adelaide from the accusations of intrigue. Lord Sefton, Brougham's friend, and his son Molyneux had made themselves conspicuous in the country by fierce language against their Majesties, though William IV had given Sefton's peerage and they accepted royal invitations and frequented the court. When the King learned of their conduct he turned his back upon Sefton, and finding that Molyneux, who had grossly abused the Queen, brought his family to the balls she gave, he ordered the Queen's Vice-Chamberlain to request him not to appear at court again. Sefton loudly abused her Majesty for this partial and unfair treatment. In 1834 still another political crisis loomed, and her name was most audaciously dragged into it by her old enemy the "Times." Grey's retirement into private life had now left the conduct of the Whig ministry in the hands of Melbourne, and at the same time, the death of Earl Spencer, Lord Althorp's father, removed the leader of the House of Commons to the Lords. Melbourne, the almost untried leader of a party much divided against itself, in dire difficulties with his House of Commons and suspicious of his colleague Brougham, almost suggested to the King that he might prefer to regard the cabinet as dissolved and call in other Ministers. William IV, most unadvisedly as the event proved, agreed with him and seized the opportunity to dismiss the Ministry, and Melbourne went back to town actually conveying the royal summons to the Duke of Wellington. Thereupon Brougham forwarded to the "Times" a curt notice with which on the ensuing morning (Saturday, 15th November) the town was startled:

"We have no authority for the important statement which follows, but we have every reason to believe that it is perfectly true . . .:—The King has taken the opportunity of Lord Spencer's death to turn out the

Ministry, and there is every reason to believe that the Duke of Wellington has been sent for. The Queen has done it all."

London was actually placarded with this malignant accusation, which was of course copied into the foreign journals at once. No time was lost in sending better information to the paper, and on Monday it rectified its statement as follows:

> It is not pretended by anybody, and we are sure it would be most unjust to His Majesty to assert, that his objections to the continuance of Lord Melbourne's cabinet were of a personal nature in so far as concerned his lordship. His Majesty is known, however, to entertain an aversion which amounts to absolute loathing towards one individual (by courtesy called "learned") of the late Cabinet. Respecting him the King makes no scruple of speaking out as of an itinerant mountebank, who has not only disgraced the Cabinet of which he formed part, but has dragged the Great Seal of England through the kennel and degraded, by his unnumbered antics and meannesses, the highest office of the law and state in England.
>
> We think it right also to take this opportunity of stating that the passage (in the communication sent to us on Saturday morning) relating to the Queen has no foundation in fact. Her Majesty had not the slightest concern with this revolution in the Cabinet. Having without examination and under the first excitement of such extraordinary intelligence published a statement which seemed to bear hard upon Her Majesty, we have sincere pleasure in giving it this decided contradiction and in declaring our belief that the Queen is not capable of any undue intermeddling with public affairs, or of attempting —what we are sure she could not accomplish if she did—to exercise any influence upon the mind of her Royal Consort in what relates to his sole authority as Sovereign.

This extraordinary explosion could not but stir great indignation in the royal family and among the honourably minded of both parties.

"It is sad (wrote Miss Clitherow) they will not let the

dear Queen alone . . . She, who is truth itself, declared the first she knew of it was the King coming to her room and telling her the Duke of Wellington was to dine with them, for there was going to be a change of ministers." She would not even express a wish upon a single appointment. What distressed her was that the King's sons and son-in-law were the first to send in their resignations and show opposition to him. The Earl of Munster had been politically active himself, and apparently endeavoured to make her Majesty bear the discredit of all the intrigues of the family. So loudly and improperly did these arrogant men express their indignation as to shock good feeling on both sides. Lord Errol "went on so indecently in a coffee-room" that "shame, shame," was cried. The Queen's extreme kindness to the King's family was being very ill repaid.

Even the "Times" thought it well to make an *amende* in a sort of aside. Among its small print paragraphs, on 20th November 1834, appears the following, quoted from the "Salopian Journal": "Her Majesty a few days ago remarked to one of her ladies in attendance, that if a thunderbolt had fallen at her feet she could not have been more astonished than she was when the King announced to her a change of ministers. His Majesty said that he hoped she would be well enough to come down to dine with them, as the Duke of Wellington would be of the party that day. 'The Duke of Wellington?' answered the Queen with surprise. 'Yes,' replied His Majesty, 'I've changed my Ministers.'"

III

DOMESTIC AND COURT LIFE OF THE QUEEN

AS has already been intimated, Queen Adelaide was essentially a domestically minded woman. Her lack of intellectual interests, her somewhat insipid gentleness, and her excessive propriety made men usually impatient in her company. She seems to have been what is often termed "a woman's woman," and many of the ladies brought most closely into touch with her cherished for her a personal admiration, and even devotion. Her court was dreadfully dull, the only mental relaxation was whist or music, for the "Queen's band" was a good one, and she was accustomed to have it play at a comfortable distance, *e.g.*, on the terrace at Windsor. But when the band was superseded by private music within, and even good Princess Augusta's old songs by the pseudo-musical jokes of the King, who thought it good fun to make an Irish peer without ear or voice chant Irish tunes, the plight of the hearers certainly deserved pity, and very heavily the long evenings must have passed. When the King gave the signal for the ladies to withdraw from table, by saying "Doors," the Queen and her company sat down to spend the entire evening over fancy work. The Queen's work-table was set for herself and any one whom she might graciously summon, and there was another large work-table at which the rest of the ladies would sit. Perhaps they might turn over some new books in the intervals of wool-

work, embroidery, or drawing: if so, they were fortunate, for the conversation was trivial and not always dignified. The Queen permitted rather vulgar hints and jokes upon the flirtations of the different members of the household, and even herself teased Prince George of Cambridge about the child Queen of Portugal.

The weak side of Adelaide's behaviour was her unqualified acquiescence in the ways of her husband's children, which sprang, certainly, in the main from her devotion to his wishes and interests, but was in accordance with a *laissez faire* attitude of mind which seems to have incapacitated her from rebuking anybody about her. As nobody in her suite could find fault where she was tolerant, it resulted that the manners of the younger ladies of her household were often very unpleasing. The Queen did not approve, but she would not admonish, so she laughed at every awkwardness and rudeness. She really thought, she said to one of her older and quieter ladies, that Lady Howe, the Chamberlain's wife, was *very* eccentric, and related how *odd* she was. One day, driving in the carriage with their Majesties, this self-willed lady, feeling cramped, suddenly popped her foot on to her husband's knee, and next thrust it out of the window. A young maid of honour (known not inappropriately by the nickname of "Caddie") was so "absent-minded" as to possess herself of other and older ladies' seats or books, and, if the Queen should be holding a conversation with some lady, would thrust herself quite close to listen. She was not a very agreeable person the Queen owned; yet her Majesty never seems to have thought of reprimanding the girl's bad manners, and actually submitted to the annoyance of a double term of waiting from her, solely because the young woman begged it as a favour, in order to dispel a ridiculous bit of slander about herself.

The one vigorous form of pleasure which Adelaide

enjoyed was riding. She was an excellent horsewoman, and loved to ride for some three hours, "at a good merry pace," among the beautiful environs of Windsor Castle. She was extremely careful that none of her attendants or guests should be wearied, and always desired them to turn homewards whenever they liked; so she not infrequently was deserted by all the ladies, and came back with only the gentlemen. Plenty of grooms were always in attendance, so that no one need be in difficulties. In the same way, when she conducted her friends for long walks among the royal gardens, parks, and farms, they would find carriages waiting at distant points that any one who liked might drive. Whether it were the Queen herself, or her efficient Chamberlain or Master of the Horse who attended to these details, the result was very pleasant, and the evidence of the Queen's consideration undeniable.

Her assumption of the reins at Windsor was first made evident by a flower garden, a model dairy, and the building of a quiet little house, "Adelaide Cottage," where she could be at ease with the quiet ladies she liked. She also paid great attention—not by any means a matter of course in those times—to the housing of the labourers of the royal estate in better cottages, whence, when she passed by, "out came the children running to her. One had a kind word, another a pat on the head." She continued on a larger scale the work she began with small means at Bushey, and at Windsor, where her extreme kindness and personal interest in the affairs of the people became well known, she was always sincerely beloved. Only among these rural pleasures and a population which was friendly does she ever seem to have revealed animated spirits—"not an atom of pride or finery, yet dignified in the highest degree when necessary to be Majesty."

The fact was that the King's good nature and total

disregard of etiquette often led him to invite more company than even the royal apartments could conveniently accommodate, and that the crowd was frequently extremely mixed as to rank and manners. It would never have entered Adelaide's head to make any sort of demur; but she preserved propriety on these occasions by observing formality, perhaps sitting apart with the princesses by her. Augusta was almost always of the royal party, and often the Duchesses of Gloucester, Cambridge, and Cumberland also, while the Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg and the Queen's sister were not infrequent visitors, and these, with the ladies-in-waiting, formed a species of court, an arrangement which, by its contrast with the genial and homely King, caused Adelaide to be sometimes criticized for her formality.

To her ladies and the members of their families she was regal in the matter of gifts, and indeed found pleasure in selecting suitable presents for individual friends, and especially for children. Her steady generosity was the more noteworthy because, during the earlier part of her married life, the representatives of the nation had not treated her with even a becoming consideration.

As has usually been the case in our slow English reforms, the unoffending successors were subjected to the restraints and penalties due to, but unaccountably never imposed upon, the culpable predecessor. When George IV was dead parliamentary indignation made itself heard loudly over the Civil List of the economical and honest William IV, and George IV's extravagances at Buckingham Palace or Carlton House were visited on the new sovereigns. So bitter were the reflections made that Earl Grey, to whose Government it fell to make pecuniary provision for the new King and Queen, intimated that he could not venture to ask the House for a grant for the Queen's outfit. As Queen Charlotte had been given the handsome sum of £54,000 for this pur-

pose, and as everybody was aware that the Duke and Duchess of Clarence had never had a large revenue, it had been assumed in the royal family that something parallel would be assigned to Adelaide, and she had, in fact, already exceeded that sum, for she had to provide everything herself, even to the setting of the jewels for her coronation crown. William IV, however, displayed his usual alacrity in relieving his wife of embarrassment. He declared that he would pay from his own private purse the whole of these charges, by regular instalments, and Adelaide had the self-command to betray no annoyance over the misapplied, almost insulting economy of the House of Commons. "No one," wrote Sir Herbert Taylor (now the King's private secretary), "could possibly express herself with greater good sense and good humour than the Queen did on the subject of the outfit." The ministers took care to give the King the credit for voluntarily forgoing any grant for her Majesty, and she reaped some reward when, provision for her dower being pressed by the King on the attention of the Cabinet, the House of Commons quickly consented to an income of £100,000 and the palaces of Bushey and Marlborough House. An odd question regarding these was raised. In Queen Charlotte's dower settlement a clause had been introduced to give her power to let or even sell the palaces settled on her (Buckingham Palace in chief) if, being left a widow, she should prefer to quit England. William IV instantly rejected the idea of such a permission being repeated, telling Grey that he would not even stay to consult the Queen on the point, for he knew that her feeling would be the same as his own.

That the coronation ceremony was the tamest and most economical on record was in accordance with the wishes of the King as well as of the Commons. The public might sneer at the "Half-crown-ation," but their

Majesties were glad to be saved some of the fatigue of what William IV declared he regarded as an unnecessary expense and trouble. Though he was gratified to find himself filling the supreme position and grappled honestly with its responsibilities, of the more conventional restraints on his time and comfort he was thoroughly impatient. Adelaide, though with more resignation, shared his feelings as a rule, but the coronation she regarded primarily as a religious sanction, and found in it a certain moral support. Her sister and brother were both present.

It was a trial to her to find her domestic arrangements and family life treated as topics of public interest, for her feelings, if gentle, were not shallow, and she was tenacious of the few opinions which she held strongly. Her stiff manner to the Greys, when propriety necessitated asking them to Windsor for three days, was noticeable. She was cold as ice to Lady Grey, took little or no pains to entertain her, and sent her away "more dead than alive," as her ladyship complained, with the degree of boring she had endured, and hoping "she never should see a mahogany table again, she was so tired with the one that the Queen and the King, the Duchess of Gloucester, Princess Augusta, Madame Lieven, and herself had sat round for *hours*—the Queen knitting or netting a purse, the King sleeping and occasionally waking up for the purpose of saying: 'Exactly so, ma'am!' and then sleeping again." Lord Grey had been entertained by being set down to play whist with the Court physician (still Sir Henry Halford) and the Provost of Eton, and contriving to win £2, which he had never done before. While the conduct of her Majesty was outdone by one of her ladies, Lady Bingham, who announced that she made a point of never speaking to the Greys, and kept to her point: "Not much overstocked with sense," placidly commented the King.

Adelaide never could forgive Lord Grey for compelling the dismissal of Earl Howe. On the first occasion of Lord Denbigh's performance of the Chamberlain's services—a visit to the play—she actually invited Howe to join the royal party, which he did, in order publicly to mark her feeling. Lady Bedingfeld, who tells the tale, was dreadfully concerned. "She is so truly good and virtuous that she has no idea that people should fancy she likes him *too well*." They did, however, endeavour to hint at such an insinuation, to which Howe's somewhat ostentatious attention might have seemed to lend countenance, but that nobody could pretend to take it seriously. It was rather an excuse for a few coarse jokes than a scandal.

The real preoccupations of Queen Adelaide's life were her anxiety about her husband's health and her affection for her own family.

The hard work and excitement of his position and his strong sense of responsibility, overtaxed both the King's physical strength and, at times, his nerves. Even the routine duties required of him involved a strain. Miss Clitherow watched him toiling of an evening over the endless signatures required. George IV had left arrears of 48,000, and William was uneasy till he had cleared these off, and afterwards always executed the day's signatures before bedtime. His hands were almost disabled by gout, but he went on steadily, dipping his cramped fingers into a bowl of hot water from time to time. It was, to be sure, painful, he observed philosophically, but it was not harmful, and the Queen came and stood beside him, but neither she nor Princess Augusta said anything, for when he was in pain he liked perfect quiet and to be let alone. This signing was a regular evening performance till the arrears were worked off, the Queen and the Princess helping by

blotting the papers and putting them back in their boxes.

Long and hot dinner-parties and late nights he also found trying. Like the Queen, he needed the open air, and was accustomed to simple ways. Whist now provided perhaps his only acquaintance with cards, and after long abstention from fashionable hours and fashionable pleasures he found the renewal of such customs purely wearisome.

Much more distressing was a tendency to over-excitement which had from time to time been noticed even earlier in his life, and had caused dismal auguries, and bets among the callous Society wits that the Duke of Clarence would be in a straitwaistcoat before the death of his brother.[1]

At times he became absurdly talkative and made astoundingly indiscreet speeches, perhaps before foreign envoys; unless he went safely to sleep after his second glass of wine the company after dinner were apt to be kept on tenterhooks. When he was seized by these attacks of agitation, which usually appeared in the spring, the only person who could soothe him was his wife, her very touch seemed to exercise a calming power when no one else could influence him. The Queen and the Duke of Wellington were the two persons in whom William IV felt an absolute trust. It is perhaps needless to say that no political intrigues ever disturbed the perfect confidence between husband and wife. The insinuations of certain Whig journalists that the Queen, in 1832, was about to visit Germany because there were "differences" between their Majesties fell to the ground unheeded. It may be positively stated that the assertion often made that the Tories used Countess Münster, wife of the Hanoverian Minister, as a channel whereby to influence the Queen to persuade the King against the crea-

[1] Princess Lieven in 1828.

tion of peers has no foundation in fact. The source of this statement appears to be the German chronicler and scandal-monger, Vehse, often incorrect in his statements about England.[1] Countess Münster was, both before and during the reign of William IV, on terms of personal friendship with Adelaide, and William IV was accustomed to discuss political matters perhaps not strictly within their sphere with both Münster and Bülow, the Prussian envoy. But Adelaide's friendliness with the two German ladies was entirely personal.

Some pleasant pictures of the Queen in her friendly moments are depicted by Gabriele von Bülow. She had been a visitor at Bushey, with her little girls, before the accession of William IV, and on writing her congratulations received a characteristic answer from Adelaide:

> I hasten to thank you very sincerely for your kind words and the sympathy you and your husband show us in our great bereavement and the change in our position. Although outward circumstances have changed I shall ever remain the same towards you. The King desires me to assure you and Herr von Bülow of his unaltered feelings and I request you to express the same to your husband on my behalf. I cannot yet accustom myself to the long-expected event—it will be some time before I am familiar with its reality. But nothing can ever change my affection for you; I hope you will believe this and permit me to add a heartfelt blessing for my little godchild.

The Bülow little girls were often taken to see her of an afternoon at Brighton or Windsor when she was alone. Like all children, they took to her instinctively. "Please, Queen," began one, "I have come to see you because I was ill in Brighton and couldn't." "The Queen," says their mother, "has a real talent for entertaining children; it makes me quite sad to watch her. First she let them run about wherever they liked, and

[1] *E.g.*, he says Münster was "in the cabinet."

then she took us into her bedroom and showed us all sorts of pretty things, and the King came just as she was holding Linchen up in her arms." His Majesty joined the little company, and "settled down comfortably in the sitting-room" with them.

The Queen's talent for managing children was by no means left unexercised. She lavished affection upon the children of her sister Ida, and generally had one or two residing with her, for Duke Bernard was far from wealthy, and the generous help given by the Queen was doubly welcome. First the delicate little Louise, and after her death one of the younger sons, Edward, was practically Adelaide's adopted child. The Duchess Ida brought all her six children to visit England in the spring of 1831, and the Queen went with paralyzed Louise, a sweet-tempered, sensitive child of fourteen, to spend the autumn at Brighton, for the sake of sea-baths and "rubbing." And it was when the Queen took her niece to the principal bathing establishment that she had the unpleasant experience of something very like hustling from a rude crowd which pressed round the royal ladies so insolently that it was impossible for them to bathe there, and they had to move down to the sea-shore. When the invalid grew worse the Queen devoted continual personal attention to her, and was deeply affected by her death, in March 1833. Her comfort lay in the affectionate sympathy of the King, who tried to carry out her every wish and was seen to be constantly on the watch to ensure that in everything, even in trifles, her tastes should be consulted.

Queen Adelaide found fresh interest in other young lives. Besides her own nephew, Edward of Saxe-Weimar, who gradually became to her almost as a son, her husband's nephew, George of Cambridge, was entrusted to her charge. The Duke of Cambridge, being Viceroy of Hanover, sent his son to England for his education, and

the lad and his tutor usually lived at Windsor, where the Queen watched over him. The enthusiastic Landgravine Elizabeth, writing to tell a friend that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have now another baby (Mary, afterwards Duchess of Teck), "which is of all the pretty children you ever saw the prettiest," adds that Prince George "is so well off under our most perfect Queen's protection and care that he is a most fortunate boy."[1] Prince George of Cumberland too (eventually the blind King of Hanover) was often brought by his mother to Windsor.

So much admiration was felt for Queen Adelaide's character that Dom Pedro, the exiled Emperor of Brazil, even asked her if she would undertake to control the education of his daughter, the young Queen of Portugal (then only a titular Queen, exiled from her turbulent dominions). Adelaide, however, declined the embarrassing request, saying that she did not see how a Protestant queen could supervise the education of a Roman Catholic princess.

The numerous grandchildren of the King must not be forgotten in any picture of Adelaide's life at Windsor. Two of the King's daughters even when married lived at the Castle, while others came for long visits, and their children were constantly playing about the "dear King" and "dear Queeny," as they familiarly termed their Majesties.

The only child whose absence from the palace was marked was the heiress to the throne, Princess Victoria, and the censorious insinuated that it seemed as if the Duke of Cumberland's son were regarded as the heir, while the Princess was rather neglected. But this was by no means the fault of the King and Queen.

It was curious that Adelaide's influence was unable to maintain friendly relations between the King and the

[1] "Corresp. of Princess Elizabeth," ed. P. C. Yorke.

Duchess of Kent, although the latter had been on terms of intimate friendship with Adelaide herself, when Duchess of Clarence. They used, said the Queen, constantly to visit each other's homes, and go from room to room to find one another, just like sisters. But as soon as William IV became King the Duchess of Kent grew extremely formal. She had, in fact, a very difficult task to perform by her daughter, and she was not possessed of tact. She was, moreover, a stickler for etiquette, and made a terrible fuss if a gun or two too few were fired for her salute, or any deficiency in state forms could be alleged, and she had an apparently unfounded suspicion that the King did not sufficiently recognize the position of his niece. But there was a more serious difficulty behind. The inevitable presence at the court of Queen Adelaide of the boisterous FitzClarences, with their by no means refined talk and manners, offered no very suitable companionship for the future Queen, and the Duchess of Kent was determined that no such unkind gossip should be whispered about Victoria as had been allowed to circulate about the forlorn Charlotte. The King's probably correct conjecture as to the true motive of the coldness with which he was treated was not likely to mollify his view of the Duchess, and when necessity compelled her to enter his presence he could not always constrain himself to decent politeness. All this, however, provides no excuse for the rudeness with which the Duchess of Kent occasionally saw fit to treat her sister-in-law, as, *e.g.*, when she would not permit her two young nephews of Würtemberg to accept the Queen's invitation to visit Windsor, on the absurd plea that they had scant time in which to see London—a refusal which annoyed the Queen considerably, especially when she learned that their important engagement was to see Regent's Park. Nor can the unpleasant behaviour of the Duchess of Kent be ascribed wholly to that rigidity

of temper and manners which made George IV nickname her "the Swiss Governess." Perhaps the remarkable absence of herself and her daughter from the Coronation might be accounted for by good reasons, but on other occasions she displayed her veritable "talent for giving offence" gratuitously. The Queen arranged a little family party for Princess Victoria's fifteenth birthday, but at the last moment the tidings of the death of a little baby in the Belgian royal family caused the Duchess to cancel the engagement. The King was wroth, but Adelaide, wishing to smooth matters, sent word that she would make a visit to her niece at Kensington, whereupon the Duchess made some fresh excuse to avoid receiving her, which really hurt the Queen. The Princess Victoria was only allowed to visit the King and Queen formally at their Birthday Drawing-Rooms.

What is probably the only cross remark recorded from sweet tempered Queen Adelaide was evoked by the Duchess of Kent. When the latter gave a party she exacted the fullest etiquette, but did not repay it by taking much pains for the comfort of her guests, whose best known preferences were wont to be disregarded. Towards the close of a very long, dull, and heavy dinner, given in a room insufferably hot and heavily-scented—everybody knew that heat tried their Majesties and that the Queen disliked scent—Adelaide could not help complaining of the temperature, and said "If she had eaten enough it would be a mercy if she might leave the table."

With regard to another royal feud the Queen was a more successful peacemaker. She contrived to prevent her husband from breaking with the Duke of Cumberland, for whom William had little tolerance. Cumberland had managed to make himself almost master of George IV, and had been given special powers in the Household, especially over the royal bodyguard, which made panic-mongers hint that he was meditating a *coup*

d'état. But when his Royal Highness, shortly after William's accession, turned back the carriage of the Duke of Wellington from St. James's, the new King deposed him, tactfully saying that his brother's rank was too high for him to hold a Gold Stick. Indeed, the energetic toast which his Majesty delivered at almost his first public appearance at a dinner was universally understood to be meant for Cumberland: "The Land we live in, and let those who don't like it, leave it." "The Duke of Cumberland," growled William, on an occasion when one of the ladies-in-waiting quoted him as authority for an unpleasant rumour, "The Duke of Cumberland knows nothing about it; but if the Duke of Cumberland can do mischief or say an ill-natured thing he will be sure to do it."

The first act of Adelaide as Queen was to send for the worthy Duke of Sussex, who had long ago quarrelled with the family *bête noire*, and persuade him to forgiveness; the Duke of Cumberland was fetched also, and the two brothers consented to lay their feud aside and preserve appearances.

She followed this up by a further triumph. Though she did not herself personally like the Duke of Wellington, she felt it to be unseemly that any of the royal family should show ill manners towards the hero of the great war, who was, moreover, the King's Prime Minister, and the stubborn Duke of Cumberland so far relaxed at her persuasions as to send his wife and son to visit Apsley House, although he would not go himself. "I am very much pleased with you," said Adelaide to him at dinner one day, "for sending the Duchess to Apsley House, but," turning to Gloucester, "I am not pleased with you for not letting the Duchess go there." "Silly Billy," however, was not to be mollified.

When William IV succeeded to the throne, Adelaide's "friend who tells me true," as she termed Mrs. Clitherow,

bluntly warned her that her happy days were now over. And certainly it seems that the drawbacks of royalty outweighed in her eyes its possible compensations. To begin with, the political capital made, or attempted to be made, by an unwarrantable use of her name was a source of great distress to her, the more so as it might confidently be surmised that it was the party she detested which stood to gain whatever could be gained by plunging her into unpopularity. Earl Howe himself felt his unpleasant position acutely, and showed it, and the whole of her Majesty's household were sensitive. One of the ladies, on being told on some occasion that etiquette did not permit her to follow the Queen closely, replied, says Lady Bedingfeld, that "she would rather be excluded from every place than that the least etiquette should be omitted: alluding to the Spirit of the Times."

It may fairly be said that, so far as pure etiquette went, Queen Adelaide was almost as immaculate as Queen Charlotte, although she really disliked what to the latter was her natural atmosphere. Maybe the strictness of her court rules, compared with the freedom accorded to the FitzClarences, was hardly calculated to conciliate opinion, especially after the laxity of George IV. From the first ball she gave, a huge and rather miscellaneous assemblage of over 800 persons at the Pavilion, the Dowager Duchess of St. Albans was excluded. The Duchess had been a well-known actress before her first marriage to the wealthy banker Coutts, but there may have been "doubtful" insinuations, probably false, with regard to her very early career. The Queen tried, however, to render rebuffs as gentle as possible. There was a Lady Ferrers whom it was not proper for her Majesty to receive,[1] and who had been privately warned by Lord Howe not to present herself. Lord Ferrers had however insisted, like

[1] She had been her husband's mistress before marriage, which seems to be what was alleged of Miss Mellon (Mrs. Coutts).

a typical Whig nobleman, that his wife had the *entrée* under any circumstances. Adelaide charitably contrived to make her ignoring of the peeress seem to be purely accidental, by turning, just as she approached, to the Princess Augusta as if beginning a conversation with her, while the lord-in-waiting asked Lady Ferrers to pass on.

The Queen's decorum was quite in place in the royal chapel, where she set "an example of being serious," which drove the cheerful conversations of the days of Queen Charlotte out of fashion. The Dean of Windsor mumbled so that he could not be heard, but the Queen used to take a book of sermons and read one to herself during his inaudible preaching, carefully holding the book out of sight so as to scandalize nobody.

For her few intimates, Adelaide sometimes contrived to add a friendly touch to the long, hot, crowded ceremonials she so much disliked. The diplomatic ladies, having been invited to a Court dinner, "without trains," learned to their dismay in the middle of the day that, at a previous ceremony at which they must be present, trains were obligatory. The two German ladies promptly confided their troubles to the Queen, who "cleverly advised us to have light trains quickly made of crêpe and to take them off before dinner as she herself intended doing." So Baroness von Bülow got hers made in an hour and witnessed all the proceedings. The Queen's duties on this particular day began with a review; then came a lunch at the Duke of Wellington's, which lasted from about noon till 2.30. At 5.30 came an investiture of the Order of the Garter, after it a Court dinner; then, from 9 till 11, the Queen received a throng of people, and finally she proceeded to the Duke of Wellington's splendid ball.

"To return to the Queen, who never talks politics, and to the Drawing Rooms . . . they all resemble the

first one; but the Queen has drawn my attention to another trouble: the ladies struggle with their trains, but she has to do battle with their feathers (each lady wears from fifteen to twenty upon her head) which get into her face when the feathery heads approach too closely to curtsey and kiss her hand. Others, again, stand so far off that the Queen is obliged to draw to her those ladies whom etiquette requires that she should embrace." Sometimes the kissing of the royal hand degenerated "into an involuntary handshake." Some ladies got so confused that they tried to break through the line of princesses and ladies-in-waiting, or backed into the fireplace. It was really difficult sometimes for the ambassadors' wives, who were safe in their appointed places, to avoid laughing. "Unfortunately from where we stand we cannot see the King or watch his struggles with the ladies. They must be very comical." [1]

The Queen disapproved of feathers (like Queen Charlotte), wore none herself, and requested the diplomatic ladies, who cannily asked her what she preferred, to wear none either. It seems curious that the rule of two queens averse from this ugly custom could not abolish it, but the forest of feathers appeared just the same, especially at the great balls, looking like a field of snow.

Just occasionally, as at the Coronation, the Queen's inward feeling seemed to illuminate her countenance. "Though she is in reality not too good-looking, she appeared so that day [of the Coronation] undeniably, for the beauty lay in something beyond mere outward loveliness. It was the beauty of her soul that seemed to shine out from and impress itself upon her whole person. Her bearing was full of dignity, repose and characteristic grace; she seemed deeply moved, and it was clear that her heartfelt devotion raised her above all outward sur-

[1] Gabriele von Bülow.

roundings. When I saw her on the Tuesday before the Coronation, she spoke to me of this quite simply and naturally, saying she had often noticed it in herself before, and that she hoped it would again be so, particularly during the Communion service."

She knew at all events how to make her appearance pleasing by appropriate and pretty dress and did not think this beneath her. She never went to the extreme of any fashion, and she wore English silks and said she hoped her ladies would encourage native manufactures also. For, fond as she naturally was of things and fashions German, and of talking German, which the French ambassadress thought she did too much, she had the strongest sense of her duty as an English Queen never to allow her personal preferences to appear. None of her court officers or ladies was German, and it was noticed that even her band was composed of Englishmen.

As was natural in one with so much practical knowledge of art as Queen Adelaide, she was able to take some pleasure in the beauty of Windsor and in its noble prospects. She and the King lived there whenever possible, and she was sometimes able to keep a few days free from official visitors on which she could see her personal friends and their children. Her sitting-rooms are described by Baroness von Bülow as "all that any one could desire. She has a beautiful large room leading into a smaller one which is the cosiest and most charming little place you can imagine. It is a turret chamber with glorious views from both windows, most comfortably furnished, and full of family pictures and souvenirs. The statue of her little baby sleeping her last sleep touched me more than anything else."

When Baroness von Bülow returned to Germany the Queen wrote to her that she had found it hard to leave Windsor at the end of October for the winter sojourn at

Brighton. "I had to leave so much I love behind me, the beautiful country, my bright, cheerful rooms full of the busts and pictures I especially value, and above all the graves so sacred to me [of her baby and Princess Louise]. To be near them does me good, as it does you; to one who has lost so much even the remains which we only preserve in our memory are a precious possession which we would unwillingly forego."

In the spring of 1834 the King, concerned by the ill health of the Queen, who had a perpetual cough, made up his mind that it would be good for her once more to visit her beloved native country. Knowing that she would not think it right to leave him, he took measures to make all the arrangements without her knowledge. Suite, servants, carriages, and every detail possible, even to the presents which she was to take with her for bestowal on relatives and officials, were settled by his Majesty before he announced to Adelaide his benevolent intention. It gave her quite a shock. "Agitated, anxious and yet pleased," she hesitated between her duty to her mother, now aged and infirm, and to the King. She was convinced, too, that the air and baths of Liebenstein would cure her, so she yielded to his affectionate persuasions. She was to be away for six weeks, and others besides herself felt anxious for the King during her absence, for the possibility of his having one of his prolonged fits of excitement in the absence of the only person who could recall him to his normal self, was alarming. The spring was always his worst time and this year he was extraordinarily loquacious and was seized by a military mania. He used to visit the barracks and issue such absurd orders that both the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Gloucester, an odd pair, remonstrated seriously.

The Queen, therefore, would not start at once; she arranged that her brother should come from Meiningen

to fetch her, and she had the satisfaction of seeing the wild phase pass and the King restored to his good-humoured self. Some, surprised by his jovial alacrity to get the Queen away, surmised that he intended to revive disreputable habits when free from her tacit control; but she clearly did not entertain any such suspicions, which, indeed, proved wide of the mark.

Early in July the Queen set forth in state. Every respect was manifested by the rulers of the City, as if to prove their recovery from past delusions. She went down the Thames, escorted from the Tower to Southend by the Lord Mayor and a brilliant company, and the whole of the Yacht Club acted as escorts. The evidence of so much respect and good feeling after previous misconstructions touched her to tears. The royal yacht was this time provided with two fine steamers, as tugs, and the passage to Rotterdam was rapidly made. Here the Queen's sister and brother-in-law and some of the royal family came out to meet her on the water, thus rendering it easy for her to observe without rudeness William IV's injunction not to meet the sovereigns of the Netherlands. He resented the King's conduct towards Leopold, now King of the Belgians. Another injunction was not to receive Princess Catherine of Würtemberg, a descendant of George III's sister Augusta, because she had (as William held) disgraced the family by marrying Jerome Bonaparte. William IV abhorred Napoleon.

The baths of Liebenstein once more restored Adelaide's health, and she enjoyed the peace and family affection of her old home, where she munificently gave a large sum to rebuild the girls' school of Meiningen—almost ruined since she had quitted the place—and to build a school in a neighbouring school-less townlet. She paid a visit to Frankfort, where her friendly sister-in-law Elizabeth greeted "the dear, good Queen," looking, in the dire August heat, "well and *cool*." But she was

anxious to return. She had indeed left with reluctance, having (says Madame de Dino) thought over things during the long concerts in the summer and found that she was "more attached to the King than she was perhaps aware, more necessary to him than she had thought, and, in a word, that England was now her only true country." Her principal comfort during her absence had been the knowledge that she could not be accused of influencing the King if he made any ministerial changes. Unluckily, as he did not make them until after her return she was too sanguine in this belief, as has been seen already.

As for the King, he missed her terribly. No bachelor amusements consoled him. "I could never explain to you, madame, the innumerable ways in which the Queen is of use to me," was his rather quaint explanation to Princess Lieven.

Adelaide's return to London on 20th August was like a triumphal procession. The greatest enthusiasm was shown; salutes thundered from forts and shipping, flags and decorations of all kinds waved along the shores, where large crowds assembled to shout greetings; bands played, bells rang, and the Lord Mayor with all the City Companies came to welcome her. She stood on deck, evidently in good health and cheerful spirits, watching all, and the loyal demonstration gave her great pleasure.

The improvement in her health, however, did not last very long. Her strength was never great, and she seemed gradually to lose it as time went on. Visits such as that of the young Saxe-Coburg relative, Ferdinand, Prince Consort of that Queen of Portugal to whom, when a child, Adelaide had been so kind, tried her much, by the necessary entertainments. Perhaps the arrival, in the same year (1836), of the more homely Landgravine Elizabeth was not so tiresome.

Elizabeth had now placed William on the pedestal

once occupied by George IV, and sat and admired him all day (she says). She thought no one so honest and upright ever existed, not only his goodness but "his prudence, his good-humour, his extreme justice" made him worthy of being his father's son: and yet he was incessantly being teased and worried. The Landgravine had, however, left England before the almost sudden close of William's life, which practically brought to an end the active life of Adelaide.

During the year 1837 her health was so poor that she was unable to attend any of the court ceremonials, and much anxiety was felt for her. The King seemed to be in his usual health, and she made a short visit to Meiningen to be with her dying mother. In April the Duchess died, and the Queen returned to find her husband deeply depressed by the loss of his eldest daughter, Lady de Lisle. His strength seemed suddenly to fail and it soon became evident that his last illness was upon him. From this time Adelaide watched beside him continually, and during the last two or three weeks nursed him practically day and night, the old King rousing himself now and then to bid her "bear up, bear up," or to beg her to rest. On 17th June he told the doctor he knew he was going, but that he should like to see one more Waterloo Day; "try if you cannot tinker me up to last over it," and the banner by which the Duke held Strathfieldsaye was duly presented. "God bless the Duke of Wellington, may he live long to enjoy it," murmured the King. On the 20th, after lying for hours with his head resting on his wife's shoulder, he quietly breathed his last in her arms.

No one was able to doubt William's grateful appreciation of his wife's devotion. From their first union he had always exerted himself to procure whatever pleasure or satisfaction he could for her. Very shortly after his accession, when the King and Queen rejoiced the little town

of Lewes[1] by visiting it in friendly fashion (22nd October 1830), he had spoken very openly at the banquet given to them. In acknowledging the healths drunk William declared that he knew that very much of the good and kind feeling manifested towards him since he had occupied the throne was due to a sense of the excellence of the Queen, upon whom he bestowed so warm and feeling an eulogium as greatly to please the hearers and bring tears to the Queen's eyes. It was by no means the only occasion on which he evinced his deep feeling for her. He liked to have her birthday celebrated with a thorough rejoicing, especially in Windsor, where he knew her to be genuinely appreciated, and the fête he arranged to do her honour in the summer of 1833 was, said the beholders, "a sort of enchantment."

The death of William IV deprived Adelaide of the true object of her life, and the long strain of her close attendance upon him, coming when she was herself delicate and grieving for her mother, completely shattered her strength. She broke down in a paroxysm of grief and was ill for some time, and though she made a sort of recovery it was clear that she must henceforth be considered an invalid. She shut herself up very much, would not, even in the autumn, see friends whom she had been accustomed to treat as intimates, lest, she said, it should open the door to others who would be offended if she did not receive them, nor does she seem ever to have communicated with the Bülows or the Clitherows again. Perhaps she was content to lose grasp upon interests which seemed to belong to her life as Queen of England. A few of her ladies remained with her to the close of her life: such as Lady Gore (wife of the Waterloo officer and mother of the second Lady Howe), and Lady Bedingfeld, the Roman Catholic friend of Adelaide's sister Ida, as well as Lord Howe and his wife. She now

[1] "Narrative of Visit to Lewes," 1830.

felt her chief interests to lie in her sister and the nephews whose careers she helped; and she seemed, said her attendants, quite at peace, "and for ever talking of the King and hoping she had thoroughly done her duty."

Her sole annoyance at this period was that a little record which had been written for her by Colonel Wood of the last days of King William, and of which she had given copies to their friends, was actually handed by the Bishop of Worcester to the editor of a newspaper, in whose columns all the intimate details appeared, and were seen by the Queen. This roused her to deep indignation.

The transition to the private position of Queen Dowager was rendered as gentle as it could be by the tactful affection of Queen Victoria. Every one knows how the young sovereign, writing to her aunt for the first time after William's death, addressed her letter to "the Queen of England." Some correct person reminded her that this was her own title. "Yes," replied Queen Victoria, "but I am not going to be the first person to recall that fact to her Majesty's recollection."

Adelaide had been fond of her niece, especially in her childhood, and had shown it very sweetly. The first among the "Letters of Queen Victoria" are from her pen; they are written to "My dear little heart," and send separate kisses to each member of little Victoria's family, "and also to the *big Doll.*" Later in life, Queen Victoria's correspondence shows how genuinely the niece repaid her aunt's affection. Her marriage, her children, and all her family now counted among Adelaide's cherished interests, and if ever the failing memory or the super-sensitiveness of age led her to fancy herself a little slighted it was with the gentleness of a daughter that Queen Victoria strove to displace the notion.[1] She was able to be present at the wedding of the Queen with Prince Albert,

[1] "Letters of Queen Victoria," vol. i, p. 569, and *cf. ibid.*, pp. 581, 600.

and when the rite was concluded, and etiquette would have required the Queen-Dowager to come forward to congratulate the Queen, the bride prevented her from thus having to fulfil a formality by passing quickly to her and claiming her embrace.

Queen Adelaide of course quitted Windsor for Bushey on the old King's death. The new sovereign begged her to choose from the furniture, etc., of the Castle whatever she would like to take with her. But Adelaide's sense of rectitude permitted her to ask for only two objects: the one was a silver cup for which her husband had a fancy, and from which she had given him everything that he drank during his illness; the other, a picture of Mrs. Jordan and the entire FitzClarence family with William's bust among them. It was better for his memory that such a painting should be in her private keeping.

She did not always stay at Bushey, but tried St. Leonards and other places for health's sake. She spent a year in Malta, visited Germany again, and in 1847-8 was in Madeira with her sister, always winning the affectionate respect of those who came into contact with her and reaping the gratitude of many by the munificence with which she expended upon charitable purposes a large portion of her revenue. The English Church at Malta is of her foundation.

She returned from Madeira a dying woman, and passed away, at Bentley Priory, Middlesex, on 2nd December, 1849, the Queen and Prince Albert having paid her a farewell visit about a week before.

"I die in all humility, knowing well that we are all alike before the throne of God," she wrote in her will. She bequeathed most of her wealth to charitable institutions, recorded her desire "to give as little trouble as possible," and to be borne to the grave by sailors, "without any pomp or state," any of her attendants who might wish it being present: "I die in peace and wish

to be carried to the tomb in peace and free from the vanities and the pomp of this world." And her wishes were duly observed by Queen Victoria.

"Poor dear Queen Adelaide," wrote one of our rapid critics, "she never did anything that history is aware of save hold her tongue and help the poor." Of the tact and the selfless affection which enabled her to change a middle-aged rake into an excellent old gentleman strictly scientific history may perhaps reck nothing. And yet it would hardly be just to remember the staunch and honourable King, whose dogged adherence to duty and principle helped to steer England safely through the revolutionary thirties, without a grateful thought for the wife whose whole strength was expended in sustaining her husband's endeavour.

NOTES

I (p. 122). The Prince of Wales's Opposition

The Opposition in the interest of the Prince of Wales may almost be considered as the first Irish Party. Of its leaders, Charles James Fox was in an extraordinary degree under the influence of his bosom friend, the Irishman Richard Fitzpatrick, whose sister married Charles's brother Stephen. The 1st Duke of Leinster and Thomas Conolly were his uncles, by marriage with two of his aunts, sisters of the 3rd Duke of Richmond, so that he was first cousin to Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Besides Fitzpatrick himself, Burke, Sheridan, Tierney, and Lord Moira belonged to Ireland, and Barré, though his father is called a Huguenot refugee, was born in Dublin, and supported during his lucrative political career on Irish places and pensions. Charles and Stephen Fox, besides their other emoluments, shared the sinecure of the Irish Clerkship of the Pells (£2,000). A favourite manœuvre of the party was to put the Prince forward as the favourite of the Irish in opposition to the King and the ministry. The maternal aunt of the Fitzpatricks was the redoubtable Gertrude Duchess of Bedford, renowned by Junius, sister of the Earl Gower who secured lucrative positions in every ministry from 1760 to 1794, and wife of the 4th Duke of Bedford, nominal head of "The Bedford Gang." The eldest of this Fitzpatrick family, John, 2nd Earl of Upper Ossory, married Horace Walpole's friend, the divorced Duchess of Grafton. The 3rd Duke of Richmond was first cousin of Admiral Keppel, another Opposition magnate.

II (p. 226). "Sin, Death and Satan"

This allusion to Milton seems to have been in considerable vogue. Burke, who used it more than once, is reported to

have declared (February 1789) that in their Regency Bill ministers were preparing a creation which reminded him "of the monster of Sin and Satan described by Milton." Horace Walpole used the simile of Wilkes in 1779 (*cf.* vol. ix, p. 53, and note on *ib.* in Index vol.). Fuseli, in 1790, completed a large picture of "Satan encountering Death, Sin interposing," which was at once given to the engraver, Sharpe, for reproduction, and was no doubt well known when Gillray's cartoon appeared on 14th September 1792. Fuseli's design is probably but poorly represented in the small print in Bensley's 1802 edition of Milton. Blake's fine drawing of the same subject appears to be of later date than Gillray's caricature.

III (p. 228)

The letter in the "Harcourt Papers." xi, p. 273, from Mrs. Harcourt to Lady Harcourt, dated 13th August, would seem to belong to the year 1799. Her description of the fête tallies with that in the Annual Register of Lord Romney's magnificent entertainment to their Majesties when the volunteers were reviewed. Mrs. Harcourt speaks of a week of festivity, so that probably the Queen gave an entertainment in return. She expressly says, however, that "the poor King" was not present, whereas the "Annual Register" says that he was at Lord Romney's fête. But the date seems to be fixed by the allusions to Abercrombie as having just sailed—he sailed for Holland 13th August 1799—and St. Vincent having "passed the Gut." Lord St. Vincent was at Gibraltar at the close of July 1799, and returned thence to England. The King was at this time almost blind.

IV (p. 309). Lord Liverpool

Liverpool's "gift of working harmoniously with colleagues of different views" had something to do with the delicate balance of his convictions upon controversial questions. Only himself could have accurately defined them. He was, *e.g.*, a steady opponent of the efforts to obtain Roman Catholic Re-

lief, but was able indignantly to deny that this arose from any objection to the *principle* of Relief. In the abstract he held it very right, he was merely convinced that political circumstances made it very dangerous to attempt to pass "such a measure now," nor, he confessed, could he conceive of sufficient alteration taking place in the circumstances within his own lifetime. In the same way he opposed the movement to abolish the Slave Trade, but was indignant when someone termed him a supporter of the Slave Trade, explaining that he abhorred it; he merely deprecated haste in interfering, because he "looked rather to an amelioration in the condition of the West Indian slaves," to be brought about by their masters, which would result in the progeny of the slaves being sufficient for the planter's needs, and then the Slave Trade would gradually cease of itself.—"Memoir of Lord Liverpool," 1827.

V (p. 349)

"Lord Liverpool is to get the Preamble voted and then withdraw the Bill. The Queen will therefore in law be the Queen, and uninjured by the Bill: and the Government will have the sanction of the House of Lords for her general misconduct, and be therefore maintained in the refusal of the Liturgy and other honours; and moreover they will keep their places, being pledged only to resignation with the Liturgy."—Yarmouth to Raikes (1820). "Correspondence of Mr. Raikes with the Duke of Wellington," p. 29.

It is sometimes maintained that the leaders of the Whigs were really as indifferent as they professed to be in the matter of the Queen's Trial. But see Lord John Russell's statement that "the Queen's business did great *good*" as "renewing the old alliance between the Whigs and the people."—Moore, "Diary," November 1820.

VI. The Howes

The Nottinghamshire family of Howe, whose name occurs so often in these volumes, were for many generations confidential servants of royalty. The founder of the family

fortunes married an illegitimate daughter and heiress of Emmanuel Scrope, Earl of Sunderland (d. 1630).

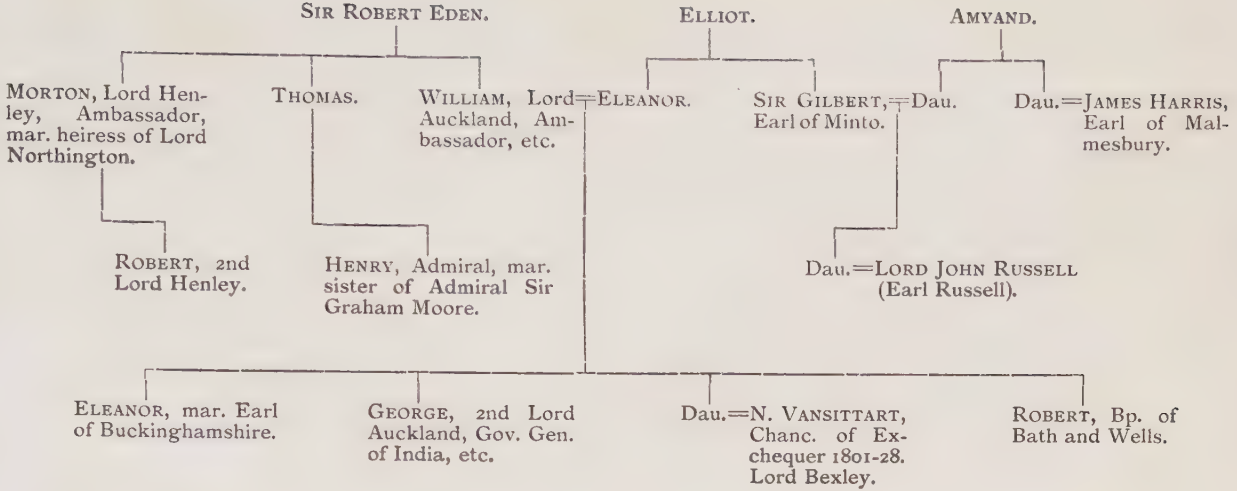
Of their sons, the eldest was created an Irish viscount; another, "Black Jack," was a somewhat notorious favourite of Charles II; the youngest, General Emmanuel Howe, married an illegitimate daughter of Prince Rupert, and was envoy to Hanover before the accession of George I. His daughter Sophy was Caroline I's lively maid-of-honour. Her cousin Mary, also maid-of-honour, who elicited Pope's verse on *Prudery*, was the fair but foolish Lady Pembroke at whom Horace Walpole laughs. Mary's brother, the second Viscount, married the daughter of Baroness Kielmansegge (Countess of Darlington). She was Lady-in-Waiting to the dowager Princess of Wales, and her children were much favoured by George III. The eldest of them, General Howe, was killed at Ticonderoga (1758). Admiral Earl Howe, famous for the "First of June" victory, suffered somewhat in credit by the King's patronage of him in opposition to Keppel. The youngest brother, a very unpopular man, was created Viscount, but died *s.p.* Their sister, Juliana, was the "Old Mrs. Howe" with whom the King was so intimate. The Admiral's only daughter married a Curzon, and their son, Richard William Penn Curzon-Howe, later created Earl Howe, was Queen Adelaide's Lord Chamberlain.

VII. Family Connections

It must not be supposed that the "Old Whigs" alone were banded in close family groups. The party of Pitt and the later Tories inherited the system. The Pitt-Grenville connection is, of course, well known. Castlereagh's support by the Hertfords has already been adverted to. The table opposite shows an alliance of talents; but even the undistinguished Jenkinson (Lord Liverpool) and Pechell families, excluding the ambassador, Lord Whitworth, accounted for something like £30,000 a year of public money.

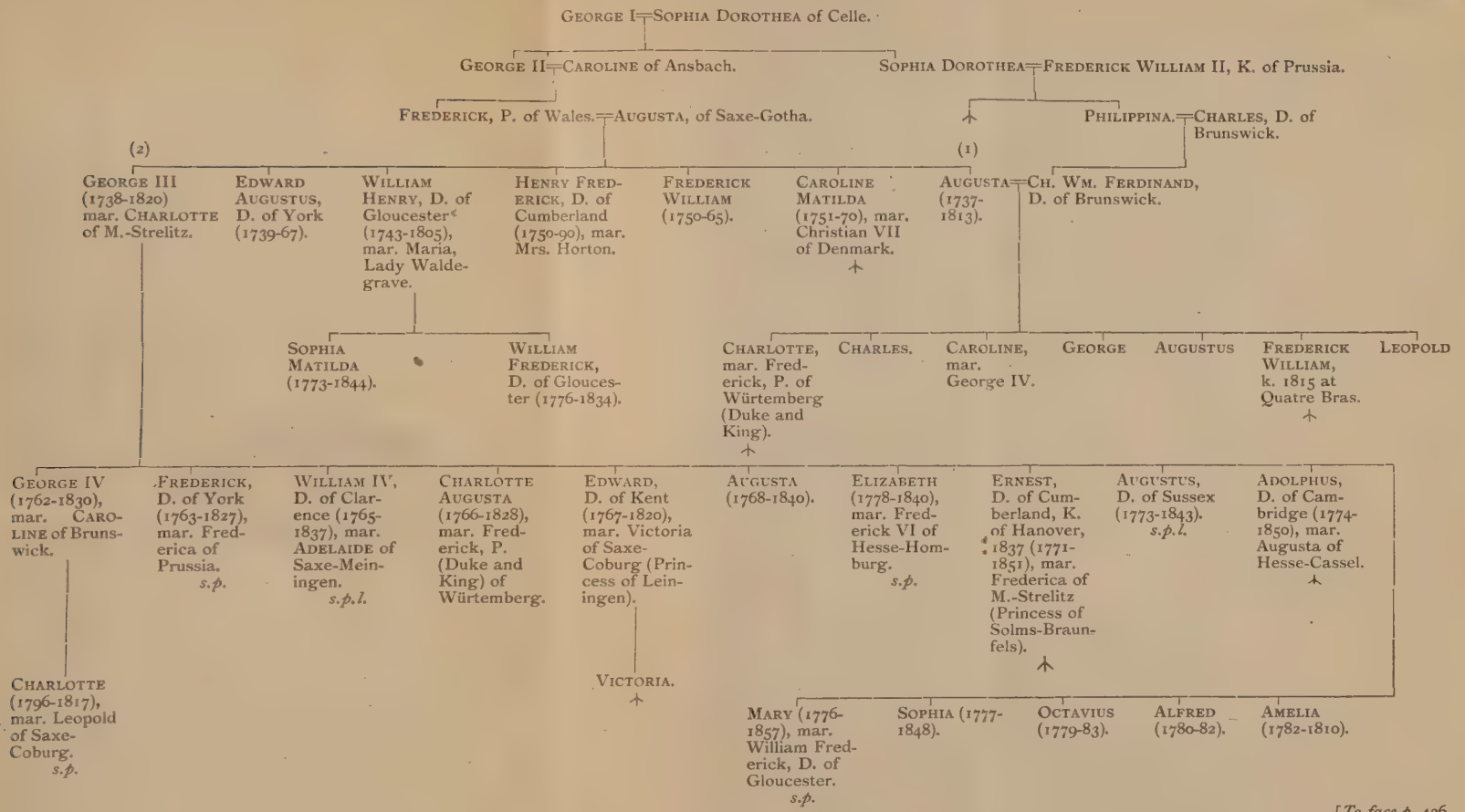
For a telling exposure see the pamphlet (by Joseph Hume?), "A Letter to Lord Erskine containing . . . exposé of the . . . conspiracy . . . against our present gracious Queen" (1820).

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
SYDENHAM
BRANCH


SIR ROBERT EDEN.
ELLIOT.
AMYAND.
MORTON, Lord Henley, Ambassador, mar. heiress of Lord Northington.
THOMAS.
WILLIAM, Lord Auckland, Ambassador, etc.
ELEANOR.
SIR GILBERT, Earl of Minto.
Dau.
Dau.
JAMES HARRIS, Earl of Malmesbury.
ROBERT, 2nd Lord Henley.
HENRY, Admiral, mar. sister of Admiral Sir Graham Moore.
Dau.
LORD JOHN RUSSELL (Earl Russell).
ELEANOR, mar. Earl of Buckinghamshire.
GEORGE, 2nd Lord Auckland, Gov. Gen. of India, etc.
Dau.
N. VANSITTART, Chanc. of Exchequer 1801-28. Lord Bexley.
ROBERT, Bp. of Bath and Wells.

SYDENHAM BRANCH

TABLE OF THE HANOVERIAN FAMILY (FROM GEORGE I)


GEORGE I = SOPHIA DOROTHEA of Celle.
GEORGE II = CAROLINE of Ansbach.
SOPHIA DOROTHEA = FREDERICK WILLIAM II, K. of Prussia.
FREDERICK, P. of Wales. = AUGUSTA, of Saxe-Gotha.
PHILIPPINA. = CHARLES, D. of Brunswick.
(2)
(1)
GEORGE III (1738-1820) mar. CHARLOTTE of M.-Strelitz.
EDWARD AUGUSTUS, D. of York (1739-67).
WILLIAM HENRY, D. of Gloucester (1743-1805), mar. Maria, Lady Waldegrave.
HENRY FREDERICK, D. of Cumberland (1750-90), mar. Mrs. Horton.
FREDERICK WILLIAM (1750-65).
CAROLINE MATILDA (1751-70), mar. Christian VII of Denmark.
AUGUSTA (1737-1813).
CH. WM. FERDINAND, D. of Brunswick.
SOPHIA MATILDA (1773-1844).
WILLIAM FREDERICK, D. of Gloucester (1776-1834).
CHARLOTTE, mar. Frederick, P. of Würtemberg (Duke and King).
CHARLES.
CAROLINE, mar. George IV.
GEORGE
AUGUSTUS
FREDERICK WILLIAM, k. 1815 at Quatre Bras.
LEOPOLD
GEORGE IV (1762-1830), mar. CAROLINE of Brunswick.
FREDERICK, D. of York (1763-1827), mar. Frederica of Prussia. s.p.
WILLIAM IV, D. of Clarence (1765-1837), mar. ADELAIDE of Saxe-Meiningen. s.p.l.
CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA (1766-1828), mar. Frederick, P. (Duke and King) of Würtemberg.
EDWARD, D. of Kent (1767-1820), mar. Victoria of Saxe-Coburg (Princess of Leiningen).
AUGUSTA (1768-1840).
ELIZABETH (1778-1840), mar. Frederick VI of Hesse-Homburg. s.p.
ERNEST, D. of Cumberland, K. of Hanover, 1837 (1771-1851), mar. Frederica of M.-Strelitz (Princess of Solms-Braunfels).
AUGUSTUS, D. of Sussex (1773-1843). s.p.l.
ADOLPHUS, D. of Cambridge (1774-1850), mar. Augusta of Hesse-Cassel.
CHARLOTTE (1796-1817), mar. Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. s.p.
VICTORIA.
MARY (1776-1857), mar. William Frederick, D. of Gloucester. s.p.
SOPHIA (1777-1848).
OCTAVIUS (1779-83).
ALFRED (1780-82).
AMELIA (1782-1810).

[*To face p.* 426.

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
SYDENHAM
BRANCH
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

INDEX

ABBOT, Charles (afterwards Lord Colchester), Speaker of the House of Commons, 258, 300; opinion of Caroline, 312.

Abercorn, J. J. Hamilton, Marquis of, his seat at Witham, 15, 54.

Addington, Dr. Anthony, 117 *sq.*

Addington, Henry (Lord Sidmouth), Prime Minister, 151, 155; Charlotte complains of, 227; 306, 309.

Adelaide, Queen, education, 359; marriage, 362-4; Duchess of Clarence, 364-72; popular, 367; death of her infant, 369; Queen, 376; and politics, 378-80, 384-93; abused by the Press, 385, 387, 391-2; insulted by mob, 386; and the FitzClarences, 366, 393; quiet tastes, 394-9; fond of Princess Victoria, 368, 404-6, 417; generous, 396; her etiquette, 408-10; her reverence, 409, 411, 418; visits Germany (1834), 412 *sqq.*; returns, 414; failing health, 415; and death of William IV, *ib.*; his affection for her, 416; her last years, 418.

Albemarle, 4th Earl of, 344 *note*, 347 *sq.*

Albert, Frederick, page to Charlotte, 10, 191, 202.

Althorp, Lord (Earl Spencer), Whig statesman, 391.

Amelia, Princess (youngest daughter of George III), childhood, 63, 213; ill health, 150; unhappiness and death, 159 *sq.*, 186.

Amherst, General Lord, royal visit to, 87.

Ancaster, Mary (Panton), Duchess of, wife of 3rd Duke, Mistress of the Robes, 10, 24, 100, 137, 190, 197.

Ancaster, Robert Bertie, 3rd Duke of, 60.

Andréazzi, French envoy, 152.

Anspach, Margravine of (Lady Craven), morganatic wife of last Margrave, 183.

Argyll, Elizabeth (Gunning), Duchess of Hamilton and, 16 *note*; escorts Charlotte, 10, 16; Lady of Bedchamber, 55; disliked by Charlotte, 176 *sq.*, 183, 197.

Armistead, Mrs. (mistress, afterwards wife, of C. J. Fox), and the Prince of Wales, 89, 270.

Augusta, the Lady, daughter of Frederick, Prince of Wales. *See* Brunswick.

Augusta, Princess (second daughter of George III), youth, 70, 75 *sq.*; suitors for, 133, 153; at Adelaide's court, 394, 397; *cited*, 86, 128, 152, 216, 389.

Austin, Willie, adopted by Caroline, 284, 289, 329.

Baker, Sir George, medical treatment of royal family by, 63, 105; of George III, 108 *sq.*, 118.
Barclay, Miss, *cited*, 22.
Bedford, Francis Russell, 5th Duke of, 76, 255.
"Beggars' Opera, The," 23.
Bergami, Bartholomew, 330, 331.
Bidgood, witness against Caroline, 289.
Bill of Pains and Penalties, against Caroline, 343-9.
"Book, The," 298, 315.
Bolingbroke. *See* Spencer.
Brooks's, fashionable club, 90, 125.
Brougham, Henry P., Lord Brougham and Vaux, Lord Chancellor (1830-4), on Charlotte, 231; advises Caroline, 310 *sq.*; angry at her departure, 329; and Princess Charlotte, 317, 323; shifty dealing, 336 *sq.*, 338; defends Caroline, 344, 349; opinion of her, 353; and Adelaide, 379, 391; the "Times" on, 392.
Brunswick, Augusta of England, sister of George III, Duchess of, conduct to Charlotte, 17, 45; and Lady S. Lennox, 31, 34; Charlotte's conduct to, 54 *sq.*; character, 240 *sq.*; flies to England, 275, 300; on Caroline, 304; death (1813), 316.
Brunswick, Charles Wm. Ferdinand, Duke of, marries Augusta, 54; character and court of, 240; anxiety for Caroline, 245 *sq.*; killed (1806), 297.
Brunswick, Frederick Wm., Duke of (son of above, killed at Quatre Bras, 1815), 297, 329; melancholia of, 354.
Buckingham Palace, purchased by George III, 57-9.
Bülow, Gabriele von, daughter of J. W. von Humboldt (afterwards Baroness), friend of Adelaide, 367, 402, 411.
Bunbury, Sir Charles, 33.
Burdett, Sir Francis, 310.
Burke, Edmund, attacks Charlotte, 123, 181, 199.
Burney, Dr. Charles, 97, 99.
Burney, Frances (afterwards Mme. D'Arblay), enters royal household, 97 *sq.*, 202 *sq.*, 213; on Charlotte, 230; *cited*, 69, 72, 80, 95, 102 *sq.*, 106, 114, 136 *sq.*, 144, 152, 206.
Burrell, Wm., 331; spreads scandal against Caroline, 333.
Busche, Mme. von der, 244.
Bute, John Stuart, 3rd Earl of, Prime Minister, 8; unpopular, 21, 26; favourite of dowager Princess of Wales, 36; George III and, 32, 48, 85.

Cambridge, Adolphus Frederick, Duke of (seventh son of George III), 69, 153; marriage, 169, 362, 364.
Cambridge, Augusta of Hesse-Cassel, Duchess of, 169, 364, 397.
Cambridge, Prince George of (afterwards Duke), 395, 403.
Cambridge, Princess Mary of (afterwards Duchess of Teck), 404.
Campbell, Lady Charlotte (afterwards Bury), snubbed by Charlotte, 229; her "Diary," 234; Lady-in-waiting to Caroline, 283 *sq.*, 286, 301, 331, 334.
Campbell, Mrs., sub-governess to Princess Charlotte, 272, 325.
Camperdown, battle of, Charlotte on, 328.
Canning, George, friend of Caro-

line, 285, 294 *sq.*, 306, 329; refuses to countenance her trial, 339; opinion on it, 341, 347.
Carmarthen, Francis Osborne, Lord (5th Duke of Leeds), 309.
Carmarthen, Amelia (D'Arcy), Lady (wife of above), eloped with Captain Byron, 185.
Carnarvon, Lady, wife of 2nd Earl, Lady-in-waiting to Caroline, 259, 282.
Caroline II, selected by George III as bride for Prince of Wales, 142; Charlotte's harshness to, 143 *sq.*; early life, 239-42; character, 245; journey to England, 249 *sqq.*; Lady Jersey insults, 253, 255-9; marriage, 255 *sq.*; separation, 262 *sq.*; public opinion on, 264 *sq.*; and Princess Charlotte, *chapter* ii; at Montagu House, 268; separated from Princess Charlotte, 276; financial difficulties, 281 *sq.*; fond of children, 284; amusements, 284-6, 301-3; and the Douglases, 287 *sq.*; investigation of her conduct (1806), 289-99; separation recognized, 299; her life, after 1807, *chapter* iv; the Regent's conduct to, 306 *sqq.*; investigation of her conduct (1811), 311-315; and Princess Charlotte's engagement, 316-18; position in 1814, 318-22; resolves to go abroad, 323; leaves England, 328; tour through Europe, 329-331; in Tunis and the East, 332; eccentric, 333; menaced by the Regent, 334 *sq.*; return to England as Queen, 336-43; Bill of Pains and Penalties against, 343-9; popular enthusiasm for, 349; attempt to enter the Abbey, 350; death, 352; funeral, 352 *sq.*; probable insanity of, 353.
Caroline, Queen of Denmark (daughter of Frederick, Prince of Wales), 35, 54.
Castlereagh, Robert Stewart, Lord (2nd Marquis of Londonderry, minister 1797-1809 and 1812-21), 306; policy, 309; attitude towards Caroline, 313, 320 and *note*; prepares for divorce or trial, 333-5; tries to increase income of Duke of Clarence, 361 *sq.*
Charlotte, Queen, education, 5; letter to Frederick II, 6; character, 8; journey to England, 12-15; marriage, 11, 17 *sq.*; appearance, 18, 22; approved, 23; dull married life, 43 *sq.*; and the Princess Dowager, 45 *sq.*; and the King's brothers, 52; and Princess Augusta, 17, 45, 54 *sq.*; domestic life of, *chapters* iii, iv; taste, 59; and her children, 61-63; education of daughters, 66, 69-79; severe etiquette, 79 *sq.*, 127; pays visits, 84-8; dislikes Duke of Gloucester, 92; extreme privacy, 95; alleged parsimony, 94, *chapter* ix; and Miss Burney, 102 *sqq.*, *see* Burney; on "Werther," 103; conduct during insanity of George III, *chapter* vi; angry with Duke of York, 133; domestic life (1792-1818), *chapter* vii; treatment of Princess of Wales, 143, 162, 307 *sq.*; of Princess Charlotte, 154, 192, 168, 307; of Princess Amelia, 159 *sq.*; of the Duchess of Cumberland, 164; of George III, 151, 154, 157; and the Regent, 160 *sq.*; unpopularity, 163; death, 160 *sq.*;

Charlotte, Queen—*continued.*
and Society, *chapter* viii; and Charity, *chapter* ix; and Mrs. Delany, 208-14; and Politics, *chapter* xi; severity of, 229; opinions upon, 230-5.
Charlotte of Wales, Princess (daughter of George IV), christening, 218; childhood, 264, 266 *sq.*, 273-6; plans to educate, 268-72; harsh treatment of, 277-80, 305, 307; separated from her mother, 316; betrothed to Prince of Orange, 317, 323; flies to her mother, 324; secluded at Windsor, 325; marriage, 167, 325 *sq.*; death, 167 *sq.*, 326.
Charlotte Augusta, Princess Royal (daughter of George III). *See* Würtemberg.
Cheltenham, royal visit to, 105-7.
Chelsea, China ware of, 28.
Chesterfield, Philip Stanhope, Earl of, on Charlotte, 43.
Chichester, Mary (Osborne), Lady, wife of T. Pelham, 1st Earl, letter to, 217.
Cholmondeley, Lord and Lady, in attendance on Prince and Princess of Wales, 259, 262, 282, 295.
Chudleigh, Elizabeth, maid of honour to Princess Dowager and Charlotte, married secretly to A. Hervey (Earl of Bristol) and (bigamously) to 2nd Duke of Kingston, 183.
Clarence, Duke of (3rd son of George III). *See* William IV.
Clitherow, Miss, 400.
Cockburn, Sir George, and William IV, 371 *sq.*
Cole, witness against Princess of Wales, 289, 293-5.
Conyngham, Lady, and George IV, 343, 374.
Conolly, Thomas, 134.
Coronation, of George III and Charlotte, 19-21; of George IV, 343, 350; of William IV and Adelaide, 398.
Courtown, Lord and Lady, 176.
Craven, Keppel (son of Margravine of Anspach), attends Caroline, 329; quits her, 330; witness at trial, 346,
Croker, John Wilson, toadies George IV, 337.
Croft, Sir R., attends Princess Charlotte, 326.
Cumberland, William Augustus, Duke of (son of George II, d. 1765), 17, 18, 31, 35 *sq.*
Cumberland, Henry Frederick, Duke of (son of Frederick, Prince of Wales, d. 1790), 28, 34, 49; marriage, 51 *sq.*; supports George, Prince of Wales, 68, 126, 130.
Cumberland, Ernest Augustus, Duke of (fifth son of George III, afterwards King of Hanover, d. 1851), youth of, 69, 153; and Sellis, 163; marriage, 164 *sq.*; unpopular, 362, 374; Adelaide and, 406 *sq.*
Cumberland, Duchess of (Mrs. Horton), 51.
Cumberland, Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Duchess of, 164, 397.

De Clifford, Elizabeth (Lee), Dowager Lady (mother-in-law of 4th Earl of Albemarle), governess to Princess Charlotte, 271 *sqq.*, 277 *sq.*
Delany, Mrs. (Mary Granville), friendly with Miss Burney, 98 *sq.*, 102; her history, 207; at Windsor, 208-14.

Denman, Thomas (Lord Chief Justice), defends Caroline, 337, 344, 347.
Derby, Edward Stanley, 12th Earl (Gillray's Cupid of the Barrel) and Miss Farren, 183.
Derby, Lady (Lady Elizabeth Hamilton), first wife of above, 183.
Devonshire, William George Spencer Cavendish, 6th Duke of, 279.
Devonshire, Georgiana (Spencer), Duchess of, first wife of 5th Duke of, 84, 89, 270.
Digby, Colonel Stephen, 20.
Dodington Bubb (Lord Melcombe), confidant of Dowager Princess of Wales, 36, 37, 39.
Douglas, Sir John and Lady, accuse Caroline, 287-9, 292, 314.
Dundas, Henry (Viscount Melville), 125, 132; disliked by Charlotte, 154; visits Caroline, 285.

Edmeades, Dr., witness for Caroline, 290.
Egremont, Lady (widow of C. Wyndham, 2nd Earl, Secretary of State), 177.
Eldon, John Scott, Lord, Lord Chancellor, 154, 271; adviser of Caroline (1806), 296; 299, 306; supports George IV, 309, 312, 313; harsh to the Princess Charlotte, 278.
Elgin, Countess of, governess to Princess Charlotte, 264.
Elizabeth Princess (afterwards Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg, third daughter of George III), youth, 63, 70, 78; 140, 149, 153; marriage, 169; visits England, 379; *cited*, 135, 137, 154, 163, 373, 404, 415.
Ellenborough, Edward Law, 1st Baron (Lord Chief Justice), 280; opinion of Caroline, 312.
Elliot, Sir Gilbert (Earl of Minto), 224; *cited*, 124, 283, 285.
Emily, Princess (daughter of George II), 35, 53, 55; visit of, 85; death, 56.
Ernst, royal page, 125.
Errol, Hay, Earl of, Master of the Buckhounds, etc., 383.
Erskine, Thomas Erskine, Lord, Lord Chancellor, and the "Delicate Investigation," 289; defends Caroline, 310, 349; opinion of Caroline, 312.

Farmer, Captain, defence of "Quebec" frigate (October, 1779), 205.
Farren, Elizabeth, actress at Haymarket and Drury Lane, second wife of 12th Earl of Derby, 183.
Fashions, in dress, 15, 17, 88, 126, 180; in medicine, 62 *sq.*; of sensibility, 101 *sq.*; in visits, 85; in art, 59, 181; in dancing, 85, 178; of immorality, 182.
Finch, Lady Charlotte, governess to George III's children, 71, 124, 128.
FitzClarence, family of, 279; Queen Adelaide and, 366, 405.
FitzClarence, G. A. F., Earl of Munster, 385 *note*; and Adelaide, 393.
FitzClarence, Lady Frederick, *cited*, 390.
Fitzherbert, Mrs. (Maria Smythe), marries Prince of Wales, 141 *sq.*; royal recognition of, 184; and Princess Charlotte, 270; and Princess of Wales, 281; discarded by the Regent, 305.
Fitzpatrick, Richard, friend of Fox, 130. *See note I.*

Fitzroy, Charles, General, and Princess Amelia, 160.
Forbes, Lady Elizabeth, attends Caroline, 329 *sq.*
Fox, Henry (Lord Holland) and Lady S. Lennox, 30 *sq.*
Fox, Charles James (son of above), George III's dislike of, 68; friend of George, Prince of Wales, 90, 113, 121; attacks Charlotte, 123, 125; rudeness of, 130.
Frederick, Prince (son of Frederick, Prince of Wales), death of, 48.
Frogmore, purchased, 147; fêtes at, 159, 165; Charlotte at, 166; farm at, 219.

Gagarin, Mrs., nurse to Princess Charlotte, 269.
Gell, Sir William, attends Caroline, 285, 329; quits her, 330; witness for her, 347.
George II and Lady S. Lennox, 30; and Dowager Princess of Wales, 37 *sq.*; and George III, 40.
George III, appearance and character, 34, 40; education, 36-40; receives Charlotte, 16; coronation, 19-21; trains Charlotte, 43-5; economical, 25, 191, 196; his family, *chapter* ii; illness (1762), 27; political views, 41-3; illness (1765), 45; treatment of his brothers, 47-52; and the Royal Marriage Act, 53; country tastes, 64; unpopular, 83, 93, 148; attempts to assassinate, 99 *sq.*, 149; visits Cheltenham, 105-7; insanity (1788), 108-28; recovery, 129 *sq.*; altered manner, 131; insanity (1801), 151; failing mind, 153; insanity (1804), 156, (1810), 159; last years, 161; overlooks vice, 183; caricatured, 193-5; tries to help Caroline, 260, 265, 268; and Princess Charlotte, 270-2; and Caroline (1806), 292, 297-9.
George IV (Prince of Wales), birth, 27; education, 65-7; George III and, 68; rude to sisters, 75; and fashionable ladies, 89; and Mrs. Robinson, 68; and Lady Melbourne, 89; and Mrs. Armitstead, *ib.*; conduct during George III's insanity, 110-28; on his recovery, 130 *sq.*; to Charlotte, 133; and Mrs. Fitzherbert, 141, 148, 282, 305, 150, 155; reconciled with George III, 158; Regent, 161 *sq.*, 304; marriage, 142, 254 *sqq.*; repudiates expense, 259; conduct to Caroline, 255-65; to Princess Charlotte, 266, 270-2, 276, 277, 316, 324; and Lady Jersey, 184-5, 255-61; and Lady Hertford, 306, 343; and Lady Conyngham, 343, 374; attempts to divorce Caroline (1806), 289, 290, 298, (1811), 304 *sqq.* (1820), 334-40; character, 309 *sq.*, 373; unpopular, 319, 342; coronation deferred, 343; death, 372 *sq.*
Germaine, Lord George (Sackville), 42, 87, 175.
Gillray, James, caricatures royalty, 93 *sq.*, 195 *sq.*, 224, 226.
Glenbervie, Lady, attends Caroline, 282, 304, 331.
Gloucester, William Henry, Duke of (d. 1805), 17, 28, 47 *sqq.*; marriage, 50; disgraced, 51 *sq.*; forgiven, 53; and the Gordon Riots, 92, 130, 136; *cited*, 16, 32, 44, 75.
Gloucester, William, 2nd Duke of, and Princess Mary, 141; mar-

riage, 167; and Princess Charlotte, 280; countenances Caroline, 315, 322; and the Reform Bill, 389; and Queen Adelaide, 407.
Gloucester, Maria, Duchess of (Dowager Lady Waldegrave), 50.
Gloucester, Mary, Duchess of. *See* Mary.
Goldsworthy, Miss, sub-governess to the princesses, 71, 73, 112, 160.
Goldsworthy, Colonel, *cited*, 198 *sq.*
Gordon, Jane (Maxwell), Duchess of, 84, 124.
Grabow, Madame, 5.
Graeme, Colonel, selects bride for George III, 8.
Grafton, Henry Fitzroy, 3rd Duke of (Prime Minister, 1766-70), 182.
Grenville, William Wyndham Grenville, Lord (Prime Minister, 1806), 289, 310.
Grey, Charles Grey, 2nd Earl, Whig statesman, conduct on Trial of Queen Caroline, 340; Prime Minister, 377; and Queen Adelaide, 378, 388, 397; and Princess Lieven, 379; and the Reform Bill, 378, 380 *sqq.*; retires, 391, 399.
Grey, Lady, *cited*, 399.
Grosvenor Case, the, 51, 182.
Guiffardière, Rev. Charles, 72.
Gwydir, "young" Peter Burrell, Lord (heir of "old" Peter, financier), 261.

Hagedorn, Madame von, 10.
Halifax, George Montagu Dunk, Earl of, 223.
Hamilton, Elizabeth (Gunning), Duchess of. *See* Argyll.
Hamilton, Lady Anne, daughter of 9th Duke of Argyll, 283, 342, 350, 352.
Harcourt, George Simon Harcourt, 2nd Earl, royal visit to, 86; helps Pitt, 120, 197, 201, 220.
Harcourt, Elizabeth (Vernon), Lady (wife of above), 124; and Dr. Willis, 120, 127; *cited*, 107, 233.
Harcourt, Mrs. (Mary Danby), 143, 188; escorts Caroline, 251-3; *cited*, 44, 76 *sq.*, 101, 107 *note*, 115 *sq.*, 131 *sq.*, 147, 157, 252.
Harcourt, Simon Harcourt, 1st Earl, 10 *sq.*, 13.
Harwich, Queen Charlotte lands at, 15.
Hastings, Warren, trial of, 104; gifts to Queen Charlotte, 199, 225; his wife (previously Madame Imhoff) received at Court, 183.
Hayman, Miss, sub-governess to Princess Charlotte, 266 *sq.*
Hertford, Isabella (Ingram Shepherd), Marchioness of, wife of 2nd Marquis and George IV, 343.
Hertzfeldt, Mademoiselle, Mistress of Duke of Brunswick, on Caroline, 245.
Hesse, Captain, and Princess Charlotte, 317.
Hesse-Homburg, Frederick VI, Landgrave of, 169.
Hesse-Homberg, Elizabeth, Landgravine of, wife of above. *See* Elizabeth.
Heywood, Sir Benjamin, 390.
Holderness, Mary (Doublet, of Holland), Lady, wife of R. D'Arcy, 4th Earl, 175, 219; *cited*, 179.

Holland, Sir Henry, attends on Queen Caroline, 327, 329; quits her service, 331.
Hood, Admiral Sir Samuel, 284.
Howe, George Howe, General Lord, 207.
Howe, Juliana, Maid of Honour, 207.
Howe, Richard Howe, Admiral Earl, 207.
Howe, R. W. Curzon-Howe, Earl, Lord Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide, agitation over, 383-7, 400, 408, 416.
Howe, Lady, first wife of above, 395.
Hownham, Lieutenant, serves Caroline, 331; challenges Ompteda, 334; his evidence, 347.

Jenkinson, Charles. *See* Liverpool.
Jersey, Frances (Twysden), Lady, wife of 4th Earl, character and intrigues of, 143 *sq.*; favoured by Charlotte, 184 *sq.*; and the Prince of Wales, 247 *sq.*; conduct to Caroline, 257-61.
Jersey, George Villiers, 4th Earl of, 185 *sq.*
Jersey, Sophia (Fane) Lady, wife of 5th Earl, 385 *note.*
Jordan, Mrs., and the Duke of Clarence, 360 *sq.*

Kemble, John, and Queen Charlotte, 217.
Kent, Edward Augustus, Duke of, 4th son of George III (d. 1820), youth, 69, 153; helps Caroline, 282, 288, 294, 315, 322.
Kent, Victoria of Saxe-Coburg (dowager Princess Leiningen), Duchess of (wife of above), marriage, 361; cold to Adelaide, 405 *sq.*
Kenyon, Lord Chief Justice, on Thurlow, 227.
Keppel, Augustus, Admiral Lord (brother of 3rd Earl of Albemarle), spite of George III against, 42, 67.
Keppel, George Thomas (afterwards 6th Earl of Albemarle), *cited* 273-5; at Caroline's trial, 344, 348 *note.*
Kew, George III's home at, 61, 65, 73, 74; his illness there, 118-20; gardens spoiled, 190.
King's friends, the, 173.
Knight, Miss Cornelia, companion to Princess Charlotte, 278 *sq.*

Lafitte, Madame, 72.
Lancing, Caroline embarks at, 329.
Lawrence, Sir Thomas, and Caroline, 293, 295.
Leach, Sir John, 334 *sq.*
Leeds, Dowager Duchess of, mother of 5th Duke, governess to Princess Charlotte, 278, 316.
Lehndorff, Count, *cited*, 12.
Leiningen, Dowager Princess of. *See* Kent.
Leigh, Mrs. (Augusta Byron), 219.
Lennox, Lady Sarah, daughter of 2nd Duke of Richmond, 19; and George III, 29-33, 134 *note*; *cited* 33, 89.
Lennox, Colonel (4th Duke of Richmond), and the Duke of York, 133.
Lieven, Princess, and Queen Adelaide, 379 *sq.*
Lightfoot, Hannah, and George III, 29 *note.*
Lindsay, Lady Anne, *cited*, 87.

Lindsay, Lady Charlotte, Lady-in-Waiting to Caroline, 283, 329.
Lisle, Mrs., Woman of the Bedchamber to Caroline, 261, 283; her evidence, 292 *sq.*
Liverpool, Charles Jenkinson, 1st Earl of, secretary to Bute and to George III, 38.
Liverpool, Robert Banks Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of, (Lord Hawkesbury), Home Secretary, etc., 306; Prime Minister, 308 *sq.*; and Princess Charlotte, 311, 317, 323; attitude on divorce question, 335, 339, 344.
Lloyd, F., witness against Caroline, 290, 293.
London, Gordon riots in, 91; Reform riots in, 380.
Londoners, the, welcome Charlotte, 15; insult her, 23, 163; applaud Pitt, 21; rejoice for George III, 130; insult George III, 148 *sq.*, 193; insult George IV, 319; insult Wellington, 380; applaud Caroline, 264, 315, 342, 349; insult Adelaide, 386; welcome her, 413.
Louis, Mrs., nurse to Princess Charlotte, 269, 326.
Luc, Monsieur Jean André de, Queen's Reader, 72.
Lushington, Stephen, counsel for Queen Caroline, 351.
Luttrell family, the, 51.

Maiiochi, witness against Caroline, 347.
Majendie, Dr., 71.
Malmesbury, James Harris, Earl of, *cited* 157, 243-54.
Manby, Rear-Admiral Thomas, friend of Caroline, 284, 291, 293; his brother's anecdote of, 296.
Mara, Madame, and Charlotte, 194 *sq.*
Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, Charlotte upon, 77; Adelaide upon, 390.
Marie Louise (of Austria), ex-Empress of the French, 330.
Maria Theresa, Empress, and her daughters' education, 77.
Mary, Princess (fourth daughter of George III), 141, 209; marries Duke of Gloucester, 167, 169, 397.
McMahon, agent of Prince of Wales, 296.
Mecklenburg-Strelitz in the eighteenth century, 3 *sq.*
Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Adolphus Frederick II, Duke of, 4, 9, 28, 223.
Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Christina, Princess of, 5, 29.
Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Charles of, Prince (aftewards Duke of), 29.
Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Ernest of, Prince, 29, 54, 224.
Meiningen, 357; *and see* Saxe-Meiningen.
Mercer Elphinstone, Miss, 316 *sq.*
Metternich, Prince, Austrian minister, and Castlereagh, 334, 339 *and note.*
"Milan Commission," the, 335.
Mills, Dr., witness on Caroline, 290.
Moira, F. Rawdon-Hastings, 2nd Earl of, friend of George IV, 290.
Montagu, Charles Montagu, 1st Duke of, 67, 209.
"Morning Chronicle, The," 325.
"Morning Herald, The," 111, 314.
Moore, Admiral Sir Graham, 284.
Mount-Edgecumbe, Lady, *cited*, 232 *sq.*

Münster, Countess, friend of Queen Adelaide, 367, 401 *sq.*
Murat, Marshal Joachim, Napoleonic King of Naples, and Caroline, 330.

Newspapers, 94, 104, 314, 378.
Nile, battle of the, Charlotte upon, 228.
North, Frederick Lord (2nd Earl of Guilford), Prime Minister, 1770-82, 43, 91, 173.
Northumberland, Duchess of (Lady Betty Seymour, heiress of Percy and wife of Sir H. Smithson, created Duke, 1766), 176, 223.

Olbreuse, Eleanora de, 9.
Oldi, Countess, attends Caroline, 331.
Ompteda, Baron, spy on Caroline, 334.
Opposition (Whig), tactics of, 113, 121-6, 132; attack Charlotte, 134, 173, 175; and defence of Caroline, 310, 320.
Orange, Frederica, Princess of, sister of Frederick William III, of Prussia, and wife of William I (King of the Netherlands), 219.
Orange, Prince of (William II), son of above, and Princess Charlotte, 317, 323.
Oxford, royal visit to, 201.

Payne, Commodore, friend of Prince of Wales, 125.
Papendiek, Mrs., 10.
Peace, of Paris (1763), 39, 82; of Amiens (1801-2), 152 *sq.*; of Paris, (1814), rejoicings over, 165, 318.
Pechell, Captain, 332 *sq.*
Pembroke, Henry Herbert, 10th Earl of, Lord of the Bedchamber to George III, 182.
Pembroke, Elizabeth (Beauclerk), Lady, wife of 11th Earl (daughter of Lady Di Spencer), 177.
Perceval, Spencer, advises Caroline, 296, 298; Prime Minister, 306; assassinated, 227, 308, 315.
"Peter Pindar." *See* Wolcot.
Pitt, William (Earl of Chatham), Prime Minister, his popularity, 21; Charlotte upon his pension, 223.
Pitt, William (the younger), Prime Minister, and George III, 94; action during the King's insanity, 117 *sq.*, 120, and the Regency Bill, 121 *sqq.*; defends Charlotte, 125, 132; supported by her, 225-7, 259; visits Prince of Wales, 285.
Planta, Miss M., 71, 201.
Plumer, Sir Thomas, advises Caroline, 296, 298.
Porteous, Captain, effects of his fate, 91.
Portsmouth, George III at, 84.
Portland, Margaret (Harley, daughter of Earl of Oxford), Duchess of, widow of 2nd Duke, and Mrs. Delany, 85, 208, 210.
Portugal, Isabella II, Queen of, and Adelaide, 404.
Price, Major, equerry, 202.
Prussia, Charlotte, connection with, 12; Caroline's connection with, 319; the Duke of Brunswick and, 243.

Ritson, Queen Charlotte and, 33.
Raikes, Robert, Queen Charlotte and, 215.
Ranelagh Gardens, 91; Charlotte visits, 22.
Reform Bill, the, summary of steps of, 380-2; royal action towards, 382-90.

Regency Bill (1788-9), strife over, 113-28.
Regency, the, 160.
Robinson, Mrs., and the Prince of Wales, 68.
Roman Catholic Relief (Ireland), agitation over, 151.
Romilly, Sir Samuel, 289; on Prince of Wales, 308 *note*; on Caroline, 312.
Rose, Sir George (Secretary to Treasury, 1782-1801, etc.), *cited* 158.
Rowlandson, Thomas, caricatures royalty, 93, 225.
Royal Marriage Act, the, 53.
Roxburghe, John Ker, 3rd Duke of, and Princess Christina, 5, 29; at Caroline's wedding, 255.
Russell, Lord John, and the Reform Bill, 380.
Russia, Alexander, Tsar of, visits London, 319.

St. Paul's, royal attendance at, 45, 130; Caroline at, 350.
Sandwich, John Montagu, 4th Earl of, First Lord of the Admiralty, 43, 182, 183.
Saxe-Coburg, Julienne of (sister of Duchess of Kent and Prince Leopold), wife of Grand Duke Constantine, 330.
Saxe-Coburg, Prince Leopold of, marries Princess Charlotte, 325, 351.
Saxe-Coburg, Princess Victoria of. *See* Kent, Duchess of.
Saxe-Meiningen, 357.
Saxe-Meiningen, George, Duke of, 358.
Saxe-Meiningen, Louisa Eleonora, Duchess of, 359, 363.
Saxe-Meiningen, Ida, Princess of. *See* Saxe-Weimar.
Saxe-Weimar, Ida of Saxe-Meiningen marries Bernard of, 359, 369; visits Adelaide, 399, 403, 418; her children, 403, 417.
Schwellenberg, Madame von, Charlotte's duenna, 10; her severity, 24; early mistakes, 46 *sq.*; entertains Charlotte's visitors, 80; caricatured, 94, 193, 225; injudicious, 95, 100, 201 *sq.*
Scott, Sir Wm. (Lord Stowell, brother of Eldon), 285.
Sheffield, Lady, Lady-in-Waiting to Caroline, 282.
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, dramatist, friend of Prince of Wales, 113, 133.
Siccard, Caroline's steward, 329, 336.
Siddons, Mrs., and Queen Charlotte, 195, 217.
Smelt, Mrs., sub-tutor to Prince of Wales, 72, 97.
Smith, Sir Sidney, friend of Caroline, 285, 287, 293.
Sophia, Princess, 5th daughter of George III, 78 *sq.*
Spencer, Lady Diana (married (1) 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, divorced, and married (2) Topham Beauclerk), Lady-in-Waiting to Charlotte.
Stade, Charlotte, embarks at, 13.
Stewart, Sir Charles (3rd Marquis of Londonderry), prepares for divorce of Caroline, 333-5; opposes Reform, 380.
Stone, Andrew, tutor to George III, 37.
Stroud, royal visit to, 107.
Suffolk, Henry Howard, 12th Earl of (d. 1779), Secretary of State, 223.

Sussex, Augustus Frederick, Duke of, 6th son of George III, youth, 69; marriage, 140, 153; and the Douglases, 288; supports Caroline, 315; and the Trial of Caroline, 344; Adelaide and, 407.

Talbot, Lord, Steward of the Household, his bad management, 20, 25, 201.
Taylor, Sir Herbert, private secretary to George III, on Queen Charlotte, 234, 382; secretary to William IV, 346, 400.
Thurlow, Edward, Lord Chancellor, and the insanity of George III, 115-8, 120, 125 *sq.*, Charlotte supports Pitt against, 226; and the Prince of Wales (1806), 289.
"Times, The," on Adelaide, 385, 387, 392, 393: on Brougham, 392; on Charlotte, 170; on Caroline, 340; on Howe, 379; on William IV, 378.
Tories, the (after Pitt's death), 306 *sq.*; attitude of ministry to Caroline, 309, 335 *sq.*, 339 *sq.*; and the Reform Bill, 380, 382.
Townshend, Audrey (Harrison), Viscountess, wife of 3rd Viscount, *bon mot* of, 176.
Townshend, Lady, Lady-in-waiting to Caroline, 218, 259.
Trimmer, Mrs., Charlotte's approbation of, 215.
Tyrwhitt, Sir Thomas, and Caroline, 261, 344.

Udney, Mrs., sub-governess to Princess Charlotte, 272.

Vauxhall Gardens, 91; visited by Caroline, 322.
Victoria, Queen, and Adelaide 404 *sqq.*, 417 *sq.*
Villiers, Mrs. George, *cited*, 186, 272.

Waldegrave, James Waldegrave, 2nd Earl, Governor to George III, 37, 40, 50.
Waldegrave, Lady Elizabeth, 112.
Wales, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, Dowager-Princess of, 18; not friendly to Charlotte, 24, 44-6; character and influence, 35-9; death, 54.
Wales, Frederick, Prince of, son of George II, 35.
Wales, George, Prince of. *See* George IV.
Walpole, Horace (Earl of Orford), and his niece Lady Waldegrave, 50; visited by Charlotte, 85, 218; *cited*, 14, 16, 18, 19, 26, 60, 85, 189, 264 *sq.*
War, the American, 192, 224.
War, The Seven Years', 4, 12, 14; end of, 39, 82.
War of the French Revolution, the, 151; Charlotte and, 152, 228; English alliances and, 243; and Caroline's journey, 248-50; end of, 165, 318, 359.
Whigs, the, characteristics of, 41, 50; in office (1782), 174, (1806) 289; and the Regent, 305 *sq.* *See* Opposition.
Whitbread, Samuel, Whig Politician, defends Caroline, 306, 310, 313 *sq.*, 320; and Princess Charlotte, 323.
White's, fashionable Club, 90, 129.
Wilberforce, William, and Caroline, 310, 343.
Wilkes, John, agitation over, 41, 67, 193.

William IV (Duke of Clarence), boyhood, 68 *sq.*, 77, 153; and Caroline, 248; amours of, 360; demands larger income, 361 *sq.*; marriage, 362 *sqq.*; travels, 365, 370; improved manners, 366 *sq.*; at the Admiralty, 371 *sq.*; accession, 374-7; and the Reform Bill, 378-90; and the grants for the Queen, 397 *sq.*; failing health, 400 *sq.*; death, 415; and Adelaide, 376, 412, 415 *sq.*

Willis, Rev. Dr. John, restores George III to sanity, 120 *sq.*; attacked by Whigs, 124, 151, 155.

Willis, Dr. John, son of above, 161.

Willoughby d'Eresby, Priscilla (Bertie), Lady (wife of P. Burrell), Lady-in-Waiting to Caroline, 261.

Wilson, Mary, witness of, 293.

Winchester, royal visit to, 84.

Windsor, home of the royal family, 73; life at, 74, 100, 108; George III ill at, 113-5; leaves it, 118; returns, 129; Charlotte's later life at, 151, 159, 166, 206; Charlotte's schools at, 215; Princess Charlotte at, 272, 276 *sq.*, 325; George IV at, 343; William IV at, 375; Adelaide at, 399, 411.

Witham, Charlotte received at, 15; Princess of Brunswick received at, 54.

Wolcot, John, "Peter Pindar," satires of, 94, 193-5.

Wood, Alderman, and Caroline, 338, 342, 351.

Würtemberg, Charlotte Augusta, Princess, *afterwards* Queen of, (eldest daughter of George III), youth, 70, 75; described, 76, 78; marriage, 140, 146, 170; and Princess Charlotte, 268.

Würtemberg, Frederick, Prince, *afterwards* King of, husband of above, 146, 242.

Würtemberg, Charlotte of Brunswick, Princess of, first wife of above, 146, 242.

Yarmouth, F. C. Seymour-Conway, Lord (3rd Marquis of Hertford), friend of Prince of Wales, 279, *note* v (original of Thackeray's "Steyne" and Disraeli's "Monmouth").

York, Edward Augustus, Duke of, son of Frederick, Prince of Wales, 17, 34, 47, 49; death, 50.

York, Frederick Augustus, Duke of, son of George III, youth, 66-7; returns from Germany, 114; supports Prince of Wales, 118, 123; rude to the King, 130 *sq.*; duel with Colonel Lennox, 133; marriage, 139 *sq.*, 151, 153, 159; Commander in Netherlands, 249.

York, Frederica of Prussia, Duchess of, 138 *sqq.*; and Caroline, 246, 248, 300.

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